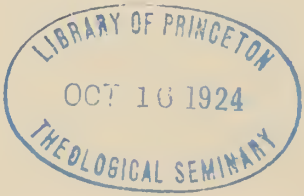

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THE ANGUS LECTURESHIP.

V.

THE ULTIMATE PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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THE ULTIMATE PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

EIGHT LECTURES

DELIVERED IN 1906, AT REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE, LONDON.

BY

JOHN CLIFFORD,

M.A., LL.B., B.SC. (LONDON UNIV.), D.D., LL.D. (HON.).

LONDON:

THE KINGSGATE PRESS, 4, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C. | JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14, FLEET STREET, E.C.

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise."

"A Death in the Desert,"
ROBERT BROWNING.

"Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed;
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ."

"Saint Paul," F. W. H. MYERS.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

THE ANGUS LECTURESHIP has its origin in a Fund raised as a Testimonial to the Rev. Joseph Angus, M.A., D.D., as an expression of the sense entertained by the subscribers of his character and services as President of the Baptist Theological College, formerly situated at Stepney, and now at Regent's Park, London. Dr. Angus having intimated his desire that the Fund should be devoted to the establishment of a permanent Lectureship in connection with the College, a Trust has been constituted for that purpose ; "its income to be administered and applied by the College Committee for the establishment and maintenance of a Lectureship, to be called 'The Angus Lectureship,' in connection with the said College, for the delivery of periodic Lectures on great questions connected with Systematic, Practical, and Pastoral Theology, or the Evidences

and Study of the Bible, or Christian Missions, or Church History, or kindred subjects."

It is further provided that the College Committee, in conjunction with the Trustees, shall once in two years, or oftener (should exceptional circumstances render it desirable), "appoint and engage a Lecturer, who shall ordinarily be a member of the Baptist denomination, but who may occasionally be a member of any other body of Evangelical Christians, to deliver a course of not more than eight Lectures, on some subject of the nature hereinbefore mentioned."

In accordance with these provisions, the Rev. Dr. Angus delivered, at Regent's Park College, in the year 1896, a Course of Six Lectures on "Regeneration," afterwards published.

In 1898, Seven Lectures were given by the Rev. Samuel G. Green, B.A., D.D., on "The Christian Creeds and the Creeds of Christendom." (Macmillan and Co.).

In 1900, the Rev. William Medley, M.A., of Rawdon College, delivered the Third Course on "Christ the Truth, an essay towards the organization of Christian thinking."

The Fourth Course was on the "Atonement," and was given by the Rev. T. Vincent Tymms, D.D. in the year 1902.

The Fifth Series, given in 1906, is contained in this volume.

NOTE.—The sentences above marked as quotations are from the Deed of Trust, executed March, 1896.

PREFACE.

It is one of the conditions of the "Angus Lectures," that they must be published; and, alas! published very soon after delivery. Had it not been so, it is probable this volume would not have seen the light. I should have wished to retain the manuscript in my possession for a time, so that I might, in any leisure moments that happened to me, re-consider and re-write, revise and annotate my work, and then, most likely, the corrected copy would have found its way to the bottom of one of the drawers in my study. But that could not be.

These lectures are most incomplete. That I know; but I am willing to hope from what was told me by those who heard them, that they may, even in this form, be of some use. Young men and women, in increasing numbers, are being brought face to face with the ultimate problems of the Christian Religion. "Never before," says

Prof. Goldwin Smith, "has there been such a crisis in the history of belief." I scarcely think that is the fact. It seems to me, as I look back, that the "crisis" of faith was much less tolerable in the seventh and eighth decades of the last century than it is to-day; but undoubtedly the strain is very severe now; and, on the fundamental questions discussed in these lectures, that severity is likely to increase very much during the next twenty or thirty years.

But I do not think we should regret this. I count it one of the good omens of the day that our beliefs are being tested in the fierce fires of thought and experience. It is apathy that is to be dreaded, not inquiry. Mental stagnation is perilous. Ceasing to think is the death of genuine religion. At any rate, these fires cannot be put out, and it is not wise to attempt to damp them down. Let them burn on. Truth is eternal. Only the dross of the ages will be destroyed; the pure metal will pass out of the furnace and find its way into the currency of the world.

It is obvious that the policy of silence is fatal to progress; it begets contempt, not confidence, and

suggests cowardice, not courage ; and both cowardice and courage are contagious. We do not help our young people in the fight against materialism and disbelief, by getting out of the way of the difficulties of faith, or treating them as if they were unreal. Anathemas are easy, but they do not convince. Better face facts, the whole facts. No discussion moves an inch unless there is absolute candour. This is the first principle of progress. Facts are of God, and we gain nothing by ignoring them. On the contrary, we lose every way. The worst objections must be heard, and heard to the end. Justice should be done to the difficulties which are inherent in, and inseparable from, the religious and the Christian position. Honest and clear witness should be borne to the Truth, by men who have searched it out for themselves, and tested in the experience of life, whatever they have found.

Réville says, "The solid ground of our religious and moral life is experience ; the individual experience of the modern men, confirmed by the similar experience revealed by the history of the past, or by the observation of other people around

us. For the Christian it is, above all, the experience of Jesus Christ." [1]

These lectures, I may add, are my "witness" to the Christianity of the New Testament as I know it; a record of my faith and experience, and I hope they may, at least, conduct the inquirer a few paces along the right road, and help him in walking towards the desired goal.

My obligations to others are far too numerous to be acknowledged here. Two friends I must be permitted to name, and I do so with gratitude: Dr. Newton Marshall and Mr. R. Mudie-Smith, who have read the proofs for me, and given me many valuable suggestions. To Dr. Marshall I am also indebted for the Index.

J. C.

[1] "The Religion of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit," by the late Auguste Sabatier. Williams and Norgate, 1904. Memoir of Sabatier, p. ix.

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THE ULTIMATE PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

LECTURE I.

I.

Why the Problems Must, and How they Should be Dealt With.

Men frequently speak of discussions on *What is Christianity, and how we may make ourselves sure of its Essence*, as though they were peculiar to our own day, and nothing more than a passing product of the present general unsettlement of theological belief.

The facts are far otherwise.

The problem is as old as Christianity itself; and has forced itself, in some form or other, on each generation of thoughtful men. Owing in part to the very nature of Religion, still more to the marvellous comprehensiveness of Christianity, but most of all to those constant

factors of change and movement which enter into the conditions of human growth and social development, the problem of the essence of the Christian Religion has been as perennial as the seasons of the year.

The terms in which it has been expressed have differed in different ages and in different lands; and the solution has varied with the varying conditions of man and society, but the question itself has only ceased where men have become indifferent to the deepest roots of their religious life, and reason has been lulled to sleep by the opiates of materialism, or by authority speaking through an organized Church.

For that enquiry, in the soul of it, is nothing less than the persistent effort of men to enter for themselves into the presence of the Eternal Reality, to gaze face to face upon the revelation of God; to win truth—the truth as it really is; the ultimate truth; that is, to win and possess God Himself, who is the Truth. It is to ask, "Who and what are we? What is this universe? What is the meaning and purpose of life? or, expressed in terms of deepest meaning, Who and what is God?"

I said just now, the problem was as old as Christianity; but, in its substance, it must be very much older; it is as old as Religion, which is God's search for, and revelation to the soul of man, and that soul's quest for God, the noble desire and sustained effort to enter into union and communion with Him; to realize itself in Him and by Him, and by subjection to His authority and oneness with His Spirit, to carry forward His work.[1]

The saints and prophets, the religious leaders and spiritual heroes of the elder time, whose function it was to bring men nearer to reality, and to carry them from the forms of religion to its spirit, are found breathing the prayer of Job, "O that I knew where I might find Him: that I might come even to His seat." And when they have caught the vision of Him, in the bush that burned and was not consumed, or in the dazzling splendours of the temple worship, or in the wonderful deliverances of the persecuted commonwealth; or heard the still small voice of the Eternal Spirit, in the declaration that to "do

[1] For further definition and discussion of Religion, cf. Lecture viii.

justly and love mercy and walk humbly with God," is what God requires ; they have reported and enforced what they felt of the authentic solution of the problem of religion.

The chief value of the Old Testament is in the rich and manifold answers it gives to the irrepressible question, "What is Religion ?"

Later, when John the Baptizer appears, he repeats and carries forward the prophetic quest in the wilderness of Judæa, and finding his answer in Jesus, he proclaims the surpassing strength, the cleansing fires, and judicial energy of his Successor, saying, "One is come after me stronger than I am. Look to Him. He is the fount of the New Religion. He will lead the new movement. Not I. I stand aside. I must. He will go on increasing from day to day. Follow Him." [2]

It was a similar perception of a new interpretation of religion in Jesus that won Simon, son of John, to Him, and afterwards constrained him to utter, with the rapture born of an irresistible conviction, that the Stranger from Nazareth held the "Messianic secret in His person.[3]"

But it was Saul of Tarsus who, though he may

[2] Mark i., 6, 7, 8. [3] Mark viii., 29.

"not have known Christ after the flesh," yet had such a deep-reaching and radical experience of Christianity as a New Religion, that he saved Christianity from being destroyed in the cradle of Judaic tradition, in which it was nursed, and gave it its grand missionary opportunity and impact. He first found that Christianity was not only *not* Judaism, but in many respects its perfect antithesis; that it makes an end of Judaism; that it has what Judaism has not, and achieves what Judaism cannot; that it is God's deliverance from Judaism as a system and method of salvation, and the advent of man to that "Kingdom of God which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Still, epoch-making as is the answer of Paul, it is not the final one in the New Testament. The writer of the letter to the *Hebrews* gives another of the many facets of the one Eternal Truth; and then John the Apostle crowns the newer literature by his own portrait of Christ, and an exposition of the heart of the good news of God's revelation in the Christ of His long experience, that has made him the most beloved of all the contributors to that wonderful book.

But not even these authoritative statements have been able to quench enquiry. The problem is still with us ; as irrepressible as the waves of the sea. The finished and complete statement sufficing for all times and for all conditions does not arrive. The one absolutely satisfying solution is not reached. Individuals like the early apologists, Aristides and Justin Martyr, tell their story, and serve their generation. Athanasius, the "Father of Orthodoxy," writes his many books, and supplies the Churches with his metaphysical construction of Christianity. Councils of theological experts meet and promulgate their decisions. Augustine, dwelling amongst the vices and corruptions of decadent Rome, feels he must attack the problem anew, and he proclaims the manifestation of the redeeming grace of God as the central meaning and conquering power of the Gospel. That answer leads myriads along the path of peace ; but Tauler, the greatest figure amongst the Friends of God, and the German mystics of the fourteenth century, open up the old enquiry, and quicken and purify the religious life of the world by their answer. Then come the great prophetic masters of the Reforma-

tion period, led by Martin Luther, to save Christianity from extinction, teaching that "the message of the free grace of God in Christ makes guilty and despairing men happy and blessed"; and that "experience is the certainty of this grace."[4] Scarcely does the Reformation dawn in England before questions are raised concerning this newer Gospel. "And is this Christianity?" "Is this practice according to the mind of Christ?" "Do the Scriptures justify this teaching?" And in the issue, we see Anglicans become Puritans, Puritans become Separatists, Separatists become Independents, and Independents become Baptists and Quakers—each and all striving to get back to original Christianity.[5]

We cannot, then, be surprised that, like our fellows and predecessors, we are still confronted by the ultimate problems of Christianity, and are trying to obtain and express a scientific concep-

[4] Harnack's "What is Christianity?" pp. 270, 271.

[5] The Baptists are not organised as a body of Christians to secure the administration of a rite in one certain way. Far from it. That is the mistake of a superficial observer. Our separate existence is one of the many efforts made by the disciples of Christ to obtain and present to men an authentic answer to the question, "What is the essence of Christianity?"

tion of Christianity in the light of the new knowledge and of the new needs of our time. It is a good omen. We rejoice in it. It is a sign of life. We welcome it. Dr. Forsyth says: "It is only by constant and intelligent effort that we keep our religion real and translate the great tradition into the original expression of our soul and age." In this grateful mood we approach our subject. The effort is as beneficent as it is necessary. The unceasing study of Nature has discovered much of its meaning, laid bare its laws, and led up to a more fruitful idea of God; so the continuous investigation of Christianity will expose its treasures, old and new, show its underlying principles and ideas, conduct us to an ampler knowledge of Christ and of His widening sway over the manifold life of man.

II.

Confident as to the final issues of this general enquiry into the ultimate problems of Christianity, I now proceed to state six of the more powerful reasons compelling the modern mind to regard all questions of modern theology, and all judgments about religion and life, as implicitly contained in, and determined by, the solution

found for these problems.

(1) And the first is the painful fact that so many men, even at this late date in the history of Christianity, are alienated from the Christian religion, and from its Founder, and from the Churches called after His name, by the palpable misrepresentations of Christ's spirit and laws, ideas and ideals dominant in the Christendom of to-day. Professor A. B. Bruce wrote some years ago: "I am disposed to think that a great and steadily increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies outside the organised Churches, not by godlessness, but rather by exceptional moral earnestness." Madame Darmesteter suggests that "the refusal to adhere to a definite form of worship may be an act of faith in the future of Religion."[6] Henry Drummond wrote what hundreds have felt: "Perhaps the most dismal fact of history is the failure of great organized bodies of ecclesiasticisms to understand the simple genius of Christ's religion. Whatever the best in the Churches of all time may have thought of the life and religion of Christ, taken as a whole they

[6] The Life of Ernest Renan, by Madame James Darmesteter. Methuen, 1898. p. 105.

have succeeded in leaving upon the mind of a large portion of the world an impression, the direct opposite of its reality. Down to the present hour almost whole nations live, worship, and die under the belief that Christ is an ecclesiastical Christ; religion the sum of all the Churches' observances, and faith an adhesion to the Churches' creeds."[7]

The continent of Europe is one pathetic confirmation of that severe but just condemnation. The Social Democracies of Germany, and Russia, of France and Italy, of Austria and Belgium, gaining strength every year, have, alas! identified Christianity with the established ecclesiasticisms, and concluded that the Christian Religion is the deadly enemy of human progress. Is there anything more menacing amongst all the facts of European life than that? Think of it; so complete is the divorce between the awe-creating holiness of Jesus and the Church in Italy, that "if a man is an honest man and living a clean life, he does not like to be known as connected closely with the Church and her ordinances, because it has come to be held as an

[7] The City Without a Church. p. 39.

axiom that men go to Church, not to get rid of, but to cover their sins, and there is a certain stigma, therefore, in being associated with such a company." Is it possible to imagine a more perfect contrast to that Church of the Acts of the Apostles whose radiant purity searched men's consciences, and compelled those who were not dedicated to holiness as the supreme business of life, to hold aloof ?

(2) Again, what is it that has alienated men of culture and wide learning from the faith of Christ ? How came Renan, in France, to turn from the profession of the priest and to seek in the scientific interpretation of the Cosmos the inspiration and satisfaction he could not find in Christianity ? What turned the feet of Bradlaugh and Holyoake, and hundreds more of their day from the way of peace : what but that they judged Christianity by its popular representations, and not by its real character and contents !

No doubt many of these persons are Christian in spirit and character ; for Christianity has imposed its ethics on society, and their influence has been pure and ennobling even where not recognized ; but what a loss it is to the world,

and to those who turn aside from the highway of truth and holiness, and to the propagation of justice and religion, that they did not assume the responsibilities of the Christian teaching, and directly and enthusiastically co-operate in bringing the world to God! How vast the revolution that would have been accomplished, if only it had been possible to secure a universal presentation of Christianity in its original simplicity and strength to men! Who does not covet a share, however humble, in so glorious a task?

(3) For the whole tale of the evil is not yet told. The conflicting and competing varieties of Christianity, though inevitable and in some respects advantageous, are nevertheless a source of pain and peril, of weakness and disaster, to many of the avowed disciples of Jesus Christ.

Sects abound. Schools of thought are many. The strife and divisions of the world invade and weaken the witness of the Churches of Christ. Here, Christianity is the tool of a usurping clericalism; there, it is anti-clerical; in this case, it is entirely priestly; in that, entirely lay; and in a third case, neither one nor the other. Now, the Christian Religion is extremely sacerdotal; again,

the whole emphasis is on the accuracy of a creed. This man is asserting that there is no salvation outside "baptism," and that declares there is none without the acceptance of the inerrant Bible. So, amid the many versions, the questioner asks, Is there a verifiable Christianity? or, which of all these is the Christianity that is according to the mind of Christ? or, what are the ultimate constituents of His religion, and how may we be certain that we possess them, and no others—possess them without alloy and admixture of foreign materials, or that we possess all of them without suffering any one of them to escape in the mist of our thinking.

Meanwhile, the young and eager professor of the Christian faith, awaking to the character and extent of this chaos, unconsciously loses the heat of his early devotion, slips out of the circle of Christian work and Christian ideas, and ceases to be an active propagandist of the faith he once loved. Paralysis seizes the will. His high ideals are trailed in the dust, and his advancing years are marked by hesitation and failure.

How necessary, then, that he should be taught *(a)* that the soul of Christianity is not to be mis-

taken for the clothes in which it is robed; *(b)* that the Christian Religion is something completely apart from the philosophies that have captured it; *(c)* that it welcomes the enlargement of philosophical thought, the advance of Science, the newer conceptions of history, and the ethical wealth of other religions; *(d)* that it is not merely a statical force, a history of great power and great deeds, but the dynamic energy of our modern life; and (*e*) that we are no more justified in withdrawing our confidence in it because of the different languages in which it speaks to us, than we are in ceasing to believe in the world's literature because it comes to us in a veritable babel of speech.

(4) Moreover, we are missionaries. Christianity is a most aggressively missionary religion. Enthusiasm is its note. In basis and representation, in ethic and in inspiration, in goal and ambition, in Founder and in issues, the Christian Religion is essentially missionary. The recipients of the Gospel are to preach it to every creature. They must go to men, like ourselves, reasoning men, also engaged in the quest for God, seeking to interpret life, to find out duty, to subdue sin, to obtain forgiveness, to be delivered from the fear

of death, and to obtain a glimpse of the morning star of immortality; to men who have inherited great historical religions like Confucianism, Buddhism, Mahometanism, and that "encyclopædic aggregation of cults and customs" we know as Hinduism; religions beloved and avowed by hundreds of millions of persons; religions that have entered into the very pith and marrow of men's lives and become a kind of second nature to them; that have comforted them in their sorrows, soothed their fears, inspired their heroisms, and become more precious to them than life.

No question, therefore, can be fraught with vaster issues than "What is the exact Christianity we should take to these millions"? Must we, forsooth, carry the whole Papal "development," so-called, to the Hindoo? Is it necessary to convey our English and Scotch controversies to the people of China? May we not leave John Knox in Scotland, John Calvin in Geneva, James Arminius in Leyden, and even the metaphysics of Nice and Chalcedon in the profound recesses of the books of the theologians instead of taking them to the practical Japanese?

Christianity goes amongst these religions as a competitor for confidence, and will have to be historically investigated, and philosophically constructed, in the light of the Idea of Religion, and the missionary must be just to the religions, local or national, he finds, whilst justifying, and as a means of justifying, the truth of the Christian Religion, and its proved capability and avowed readiness to absorb and assimilate the wealth of truth in all other religions; and therefore it is the more incumbent upon him that he shall rigidly separate Christianity from all its accretions, and offer nothing to the stranger as the essence of the Christian Religion which is not its living reality, its indestructible soul.[8]

(5) A further consideration lies nearer home. This search into the ultimate problems of Christianity is requisite so that Christian theology may be brought into accurate relations with its

[8] "The opening of the world, and the discovery and investigation of its religions have immensely increased the urgency of the question, 'What is Christianity?' Contact with Islam in the first half of the XIIIth Century had a similar effect." Cf. "The Essence of Christianity. A Study in the History of Definitions," by William Adams Brown, Ph.D., D.D. T. and T. Clark. p. 76.

historical basis. Christianity is history. That is indisputable; and the theology that does not rest on ascertainable facts; that is not in harmony with the Person of the Founder and with His ideas and work, with the whole fact and the whole order of Christ's thought is "in the air." It may have many charms. It may make slight demands on thought. It need not lack a certain kind of power, or "authority"; it may be presented with devoutness and served with ardour; but if it does not found itself on the historical facts proved in a scientific historical way, then anything may pass under its name, and any departures from the mind of the Founder may claim His authority, though distinctly contrary to His will. This definite building of Theological Science on the real history of Christianity is necessary, in loyalty to the Divine Originator, for the sake of intellectual accuracy, and for the maintenance of the scientific character and values of Christian Theology.

More than half of our current "faith" rests, I fear, upon unhistorical foundations. The theologians of the last quarter of a century, and more, have been engaged in clearing Christianity

of the accumulations gathered about it, and hiding it; accumulations alien to its spirit, and inimical to its true and full development. The process has been one of unloading, and it has not been altogether pleasant. But all scientific workers have to undertake it; the astronomer, the geologist, the chemist, and it is not likely the theologian can escape. It is human and inevitable. It is an exacted labour preparatory to reconstruction on the basis of ascertained fact. The modern mind demands it. It is not averse to doctrinal forms of theology; far from it! The objection is to unsupported conjecture, obsolete and vacuous forms, urged as authoritative because they are ancient, and accepted, not because of their present vitality, but for their past virtues, like the records on the tombstones of the departed. What is required is the effort to conceive and represent the Christian religion so scientifically as to make Christian theology part of the world in which the actual man of to-day lives and moves and has his being.

(6) It is little more than stating the same fact in another form, when I say that the deepest need of all is that of discovering the actual truth, the

central and governing realities, the veritable essence of the Christian religion. Religions live and thrive and serve by the truth they possess. Truth is eternal. It is one ; and in the long run it prevails. Zola says, "Truth is on the march, and nothing can stop it." The religion that contains the highest truth is the absolute Religion, and will be the universal religion ; for man is made for truth, as the eye for light, and the ear for sound, and the heart for love. He is predestined to know it and enjoy it. It makes him free and strong and glad. He is born to ask, "What is"? "What really is"? That interrogation is ever on his lips. In a thousand differing ways he shows his yearning for it ; follows will-o'-the-wisps, listens to deceptive voices, falls into the hands of designing men ; but his search is for truth, for reality, that is, for God, and he is restless until he finds Him.

Urged by reasons such as these, men are being constrained to attempt, what often seems an impossible task, the solution of the ultimate problems of the Christian Religion.

III.

We thus come to our second question, for we

cannot solve the problem of the intrinsic character and essence of the Christian Religion except by facing the further problem of the means and methods by which we may, in the prevailing clash and confusion of thought, make ourselves perfectly sure as to what Christianity is and what it is not.

This is the terrible Sphinx we have to answer, or for all immediately practical purposes we fail. We need a working conviction, a full assurance of understanding, firm foothold in the stress and storm of everyday life, through the bitterest experiences of evil, and the fiercest assaults of the spirit of doubt and denial.

We have, therefore, to demand the criterion or criteria by which we shall reach our goal. Sabatier says : "To the thinking man the discord between methods is a graver matter than the opposition between doctrines" ; and again, "To a Religion the really grave matter is not opposing doctrines but antagonistic methods;"[9] which means that

[9] The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit, by Auguste Sabatier. Williams and Norgate. p. 21. et seq. Cf. Encyclopædia Metropolitana. General Introduction or Preliminary Treatise on Method.

contradictions in doctrine are due to the employment of different methods of investigation, and that we cannot expect to arrive at the reality and true unity of the faith until we agree to travel by the same route—that is, until we have found the one sure method of arriving at the truth as it really is.

If I want to know the contents, qualities, and forces of the sun, the man of science supplies me with a set of instruments which enable me to see for myself that cobalt and nickel, iron and phosphorus, have their home in that luminary; and that method, whenever, and by whomsoever, employed, yields the same sure truth about the sun. If I want to know the length of a bale of cloth, a measure is given, whose accuracy may be tested by a standard let into the wall of the House of Commons. Is there a measuring rod that will not play me false in these higher things? Can I obtain firm standing-ground as to the facts of Christianity and their meaning? Can I make myself sure as to what facts should go into the laboratory for experiment, and what should be kept out? Are there valid criteria for a constructive Christian theology, ecclesiology, and sociology?

Scientific and practical men find truth and unity by using one and the same method. Method, in fact, is all in all. A wrong one is fatal to success in the search for truth. The right one may be trusted to the uttermost. Professor W. K. Clifford "believed very decidedly that the difference between right and wrong *method* is everywhere important; and that there is only *one* right method for all departments of knowledge."[10] The use of a new method may discover a new world. Bacon's *Novum Organum*, or inductive method of scientific study, although insufficient, as Mill showed, to detect some of the more obscure laws of nature, was the one key that opened numberless doors into the many-roomed mansions of the universe. We differ as to what Christianity is, just as Ptolemy and Copernicus differed about the earth and the sun; but not

[10] Lectures and Essays by William Kingdon Clifford, F.R.S. Edited by Leslie Stephen and Sir Frederick Pollock. Macmillan, 1904. p. 16. "My admiration for the Method of Science, and my estimate of the value of its results, have only increased in the passage of time and through all the changes of my growth of mind." "An Agnostic's Progress," by W. S. Palmer. *Contemporary Review*, vol. lxxxix. January, 1906, p. 26. Cf. also "The Scientific Temper in Religion," by Rev. P. N. Waggett, M. A. Longmans. p. 23. et seq.

because of differences in the religious phenomena which form the permanent object of examination. Nature and the Christian Religion are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It is the existence of fundamental differences of methods of work upon the phenomena which produces collisions and contradictions in interpretation.

The change of method did not destroy the earth and the sun ; they remained ; what passed away were the astrology and physics of ancient days ; what issued were a new physics and a true astronomy. So the same scientific method introduced into Christian theology, though it may entail the transformation of sacred institutions and the destruction of long-established systems of thought, will not alter a single fact of the Christian religion ; we shall still have our solid earth of ideas on which to stand and our Eternal Sun of Righteousness to irradiate it with His beams and to enrich it with His life.

Briefly stated, our method is as follows :

(1) No assumption must be allowed that Christianity is itself the one true, final and absolute religion. That may, or may not, be proved. It is not, however, to be taken for granted. Certain

presuppositions are unavoidable ; but that is not one. I am only handling two of the ultimate questions of Christianity. I have to assume a psychology of man and a philosophy of religion ; but nothing must be assumed as to Christianity.

(2) We must settle as rigidly as possible what are, and what are not, legitimate sources of evidence.

(3) We must get at the facts, the verifiable facts, the whole of the facts of original Christianity ; sift them, classify them, so as to extract the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

(4) It is necessary to treat the Christian Religion as one of the religions of the world, and investigate its contents in precisely the same way as students of the Science of Comparative Religion examine Mohammedanism or Confucianism.

(5) Lastly, we must summon all available and pertinent history for evidence, individual and social, outward and inward, exactly as men of science would embrace, for purposes of illustration and confirmation, all similar material in geology or astronomy.

IV.

But, first : Is it right to treat Christianity as

one of the religions of the world? Does it not stand isolated and apart? Kuenen not only asserts that it is one amongst the religions of the world; but that it is that, "and nothing less and nothing more"; and although we shall prove (if I may anticipate the conclusion to be afterwards established) that it is the religion of the Spirit, and the climax and crown of other religions; yet it would be most unscientific to examine it, as though it stood outside the religious development of the life of man. It would be to misread the past; to misjudge God, who has "never left Himself without witness" in any age or nation, and has always accepted those who feared Him and wrought righteousness; and to discredit those distinguishing faculties of man, his reason and his conscience, his intuition and spiritual insight, from whose use have proceeded the most luminous and beneficent movements of his long experience.

For these religions are man's real history. They are, in part, his creation. They reveal him, in the soul of him; what he is, what he needs, what he seeks, and what he may achieve. They show him in his insatiable quest for the Holy Grail; and though he has often been misled into the quag-

mires of illusion and superstition, yet he has not been without cheering and guiding responses from the Eternal. In those religions we see man seeking God, and also and even more evidently God seeking man ; the pathetic and beautiful endeavours of both towards that union of man with God which is the soul and goal of all religion.

Being a historical religion, it must be treated in a historical way. That is fundamental. It must be judged by the same rules and subjected to the same canons of criticism as are applied to Buddhism or Parseeism. Its books must be treated as part of the literature of the world, and its facts as part of the history of the world. They do not form a category by themselves, and they must therefore be subjected to the same laws of study as have been applied to other collections of ancient literary documents. That ought not, at this time of day, to need any defence. It is simple justice. It is sound science. Its fruitfulness up to the present is creative of thankfulness and hope. The Hegelian idea that Christianity is to be manifested by philosophy and not by history has been displaced, for Christianity is not

in its essence a speculative "idea," the "metaphysical truth of the identity in the difference of God and man, of infinite and finite spirit"; it is concrete historical fact, and it is unscientific to attempt to make it ideal and independent of history. The modern mind cannot find rest in that process. It demands more. The conception of history is entirely changed, and changed in the most radical way. This is so marvellous, that Professor Dœllinger speaks of it as though it were an addition of a new sense, "the historic sense," to the stock of tools used by men in the pursuit of knowledge,[11] and the use of this instrument has been, and will be, so vast over the widest areas of human thought and life, that its uprising marks a revolution far greater than that of Cromwell, or that recalled by the fame of Erasmus. It is not possible for us to estimate what it means. "The current version of history is quite a different thing from history itself." The story of the past has to be re-written. Hardly a page of it will remain exactly, and in all respects, as it was before. Every statement is traced back

[11] Dœllinger's "Historical and Literary Addresses," John Murray, 1894, p. 32.

to its author. The author himself is then put in the witness-box, and examined and cross-examined. His value is rigidly scrutinised, and if he cannot give a good account of himself he is told rather imperiously to "stand down." Then it is asked, "Is he prejudiced? What motives had he for making his statements? Is there any proof other than his word for what he says? Have we any evidence from language or institutions, from custom or folk-lore? Can the spade help us? Will it avail to dig up roads, to disinter buried cities"? Indeed, no verdict is unassailable till it has been finally endorsed in the Court of Absolute Truth.

Already this new habit of mind has wrought wonders. It has created a new branch of investigation, called the Study of Sources.[12] It has reversed verdicts that had been unchanged for centuries. It has shattered far-resounding reputations, and pilloried their owners for evermore. It has lifted the obloquy of ages from brave and

[12] Cf, an admirable address on the "Study of History and on the Historic Habit of Mind in the Nineteenth Century," by Prof. Pelham; and also Prof. Ramsay's "St. Paul, the Traveller and Citizen," pp. 368-9.

intrepid souls, like Luther and Cromwell. It has undermined hoary edifices, and made their dwellers to quake in their shoes. Papal infallibility, and indeed the whole Papacy, is made to look very ridiculous. It is seen to stand on a gigantic forgery, of which all honest men will by-and-by be utterly ashamed. The Divine right of Episcopacy vanishes into thinnest air. Creeds take their true place as symbols and registers of theological contests, often strangely mixed, and sometimes falsely labelled. Even the Oxford Movement, claiming to be historical, is shown to "have accomplished its work through what it brought to history, not through what it found in it." [13] And we may confidently expect that it will give us in due time a scientific reconstruction of the past, as it really was, free from the imaginings and inventions of historians, free from the bias of the writer who described the past merely to show that God was on his side, and shorn of the embellishments of the artist who could not endure to see an incomplete picture.

This is the method that has been pursued for some years now, not, be it confessed, without

[13] Dr. Fairbairn's "Catholicism, Roman and Anglican," p. 34.

some mistakes in temper and in statement; but if I may anticipate subsequent lectures, I must add that the confirmations of the Christian faith given by it are abundant and strong. The Christian verities are more secure than ever. The historicity of Jesus Christ stands out like the Matterhorn amongst the mountains. The worth of the example of Jesus is proclaimed with enthusiasm and affection. The method of the Cross is felt to point the way to the rescue and perfection of the individual, and to the reconstruction of our social order; and so the Science of Comparative Religion is the means of adding one more to the many crowns on the head of Christ.

V.

The method set in competition with this bears the name of "authority," and purports to deliver ready-made, all-sufficing, and wholly from without the individual soul, a statement of the permanent qualities, contents and forces of the Christian Religion. The problem is solved by the fiat of a Pope, the ukase of a Czar, the letter of a Parliamentary Creed, or the verdict of an organized Society. It is a human voice demanding unquestioning obedience from another human being

without requiring the assent of the reason and judgment and conscience of that being.

Now "blank authority" is seen at its best in the realm of babyhood; though it is not always successful even there; but after ten years of escape from the cradle, the authority begins to wane, and before twenty are passed, it has disappeared altogether; for as Professor Denney writes, "Once a mind has come to know itself, there can be no such thing as blank authority." In religion the acceptance of such an authority is the mark of infancy, or indolence, or cowardice, or senility, and is most disastrous in its effect on Man and on Society. Acquiescence in it is mental stagnation, the paralysis of the will, the arrest of progress, the death of civilisation. It excludes personal action, dethrones the reason, and poisons the conscience. It excludes that sustained effort, that struggle with difficulty by which the man is educated and his being enlarged. It is mechanical, external, unverifiable, and wholly out of relation to the spirit which, after all, is the man. Thus Newman in the first of the "Tracts for the Times" asks, speaking for the clergy, "On what shall we rest our authority when the State deserts

us?" And his answer is, "On our apostolic descent." But what is that? Hear him! "The Lord Jesus Christ gave His Spirit to His Apostles. They in their turn, laid their hands on those who should succeed them, and these again on others; and so the sacred gift has been handed down to our present bishops, who have appointed us their assistants, and in some sense representatives." It is a captivating theory; but it is a theory in mid-air. It has no solid basis. It repudiates the facts of the New Testament, of ancient history, of modern thought, and of Christian experience and common sense. There is not a realm of progressive human knowledge, or of beneficent action, where anything like it, in the least degree, is accepted. It strikes a fatal blow at the manhood of man. For him the one authority is God; the ultimate authority must always be God. Placed, he may be, under tutors and governors, during his infancy, and to their claims as teachers and rulers he may give obedience, more or less unquestioning: but when the man is formed within him, he knows no master of his soul but God. Truth claims the assent of his reason, but God is the Truth. Love opens the heart and

constrains its affectionate homage, but God is love. Righteousness secures the response of the illumined conscience ; but God is Light and Righteousness, and in Him is no shadow at all. So the soul assents to its best, its highest self in surrendering to the righteousness, the love and the truth of God : that surrender is the faculty we have within us of apprehending truth, rejoicing in love, and appreciating and obeying righteousness. To that faculty, or set of faculties, God speaks in His works, in the life of man and nations, in history, in Churches, and in great personalities, the masters of the spiritual life, the men of spiritual insight, keen perception of truth, love and righteousness, in the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman world ; but chiefest of all, in Jesus of Nazareth ; for "God," in the fulness of His being "was in Christ," and so Christ becomes the supreme authority in Religion ; not a mechanical authority, acting from without and imposing obedience, but acting within by the Truth He gives to the reason, the Grace with which He fills the heart, and the Righteousness that re-inforces the will and transforms the character.[14]

[14] See Note Pages 38, 39.

VI.

Another point remains to be considered before we leave this question of method.

It will be said this process is all very well for the expert theologian ; but what about "the man in the street ?" What can he do with it ? Where is the value of it to the individual who knows no Greek, and is compelled to know very much about business ; who has no time to study the principles of textual criticism, and is absorbed in making both ends meet.

Religion is not the luxury of the learned ; it is the very life of man as man. Least of all does the Christian Religion create a literary caste ; it is the determined foe of castes, literary, or clerical, or social. It is the necessary food of man ; and nothing could be more foreign to its spirit and genius than that, as at Alexandria at the close of the second century, there should be set up a feeling of alienation between "simple believers and Christian Gnostics." [15]

Here it is that we find the service of our method as it is seen at work in the Science of Comparative Religion.

[15] "Cambridge Theological Essays," Edited by Dr. H. B. Swete, p. 418.

It is asserted that they are divisible into two classes, according to their origin; first, those that originate amongst the people and grow slowly into form and shape, as from a number of far-parted germs in the life of a community like the Greeks or the Romans, or the millions of Hindostan. These are classified as natural religions, and Hinduism is a very complete type. Secondly there are religions which are the creation of some great religious genius, who rises and reshapes the thought and life of a nation or an empire, or a cluster of empires, as with Moses and Hebraism, or Mahomet and Islam.

To me this division and classification is far from satisfactory. I cannot conceive any religion originating apart from some special personality. That personality, or those personalities, may not be discoverable in the mist of the ages; but I feel certain he was, or they were there; and that out from the deeps of a spirit communing with God through His works, he, or they, spoke the word, or gave out the symbol of the advancing life.

Nor do I think that the distinction between Confucius as a reformer, and not a founder, of religion is valid; for every Founder is a Reformer,

and every Reformer is a Founder, though creative work is less determinative in some cases than others; but the principle that is of special value is this, that when we are asking what is the religion of Greece, or of Rome, we are in a different position from that we occupy when we are enquiring as to the contents of Islam; for in the latter case there are facts of a distinctively personal character which must greatly affect our answer; facts we have few means of becoming acquainted with, in the case of the religion of Greece. It is therefore an accepted principle that in what are called the second class of religions we must begin with the Founder. We must ask him what his religion is. We cannot pass him by. We cannot ignore him. His answer must be exhausted. He must be heard out to the end. Moses for Hebraism, Buddha for the Buddhists, and Christ for Christianity.

Now, nowhere is this principle more easily set to work than in the Christian Religion; for in a sense, I will not say unique, but I do say most eminent, Christ Jesus is the creator of His Religion. It derives from Him. It is not independent of, or unassociated with the Old Testament Religion, the religion of the prophets of Israel; but its point of

view is not Hebraic, is not even Mosaic. It has an originality due to its Founder, and therefore we must, if we can, know Him, what He thought, what He proposed, what were His ideas and His ideals, what were His deeds, what His creation, if we are to have a reliable answer to the question, What is Christianity ?

Here, therefore, is deliverance for the "man in the street." He can know enough from the English version of the New Testament about Christ to test his religion ; he can find out for himself what Christianity is without testing the validity of this or that document, or determining whether Christ said or did not say this particular word, or do this special deed ; he can know of the teaching whether it is true or not, by experience ; he can open his heart to the love of God in Christ, as to a friend ; he can test by practice the righteousness which is set before his will ; and so he can secure the consent of himself to himself, which is the first condition and foundation of certitude.[16]

That, in fact, was the method of Jesus in Palestine. He proceeded upon the principle that

[16] See Note Pages 39, 40.

it was the right of, as there was the capacity in, the individual man to challenge every assertion of "authority," and to treat himself as constituted, by God's indwelling, a final Court of Appeal. He directly and habitually appealed to the authority that speaks within the soul, and against that external authority which was claiming homage through an organized Society. He encouraged men to trust in the voice of the Spirit, which is never silent in the heart of him who is prepared to listen thereto and not to dogmas externally imposed. That was the method of Jesus, and that is the method vindicated at once by reason, by science, and by the widest and best experience.[17]

[17] See Note Page 40.

NOTE 14. PAGE 33.

THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY.

"Christianity, of all religions, should be the last to appeal to credulity, and to teach superstition; its appeal should be ever to a man's judgment, and its hope to establish it in truth. The business of reason is to sift what is real from what is unreal, to crush and wash the quartz, to gather the particles of pure gold, and to offer the precious metal for the acceptance of faith. Reason searching the Bible and travelling through the history of the Churches leaves the chaff and keeps the corn—taking Abraham's splendid faith, leaving the

intended sacrifice of Isaac; taking the pity of God over Nineveh, and leaving the fanaticism of Jonah; taking the spirituality of the Psalms, and leaving their fierce invectives; taking St. Paul's love for Christ, and leaving his Rabbinical arguments; taking the patient study of the fathers, and leaving their fantastic allegories; taking the Institutes of John Calvin, and leaving his persecution of Servetus; taking John Knox's courage, but leaving his frequent roughness; taking the Puritans' earnestness, but leaving their narrowness. And we know what to take by its radiant reasonableness, because nothing can be more becoming, more winning, more satisfying, and more like God. This we ought to believe is a reasonable world, wherein the reason planted in the human mind will harmonise with the reason which speaks from without, and therefore we need neither deny nor suspect this high faculty which God has set as an inner light within the soul. As one of the most spiritual philosophical thinkers of our day, the present Master of Balliol, has written, 'Reason lies nearer to us than any external authority, and no outward evidence can be sufficient to overturn its testimony. . . . . It is only because the content of a revelation is implicitly rational that it can possess any self-evidencing power, or exert any moral influence on the human spirit.'"—Dr. JOHN WATSON, Sermon before the Pan Presbyterian Council.—"Every man's reason is his best Œdipus." Sir Thomas Browne.

NOTE 16. PAGE 37.

THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE.

"The first Japanese Protestant Christian was Wakasa, who found a Bible in the waters of Veddo Bay in 1854. 'Sir,' said he, 'I cannot tell you my feelings when for the first time I read the account of the character and work of Jesus Christ. I had never seen, or heard, or imagined such a person. I was filled with admiration, overwhelmed with emotion, and taken captive by the record of His nature and work.' Wakasa

accepted that Christ as his Saviour and Master."

Sabatier writes: "I am not ignorant of the fact that to souls who are strangers to the inner life, the words *Christian experience* represent only something vague and intangible. . . . Far from being vague and obscure, Christian experience, to every one who is conscious of it, is something morally very clear, accurately determined, which each finds, not only in himself, but in everyone whose consciousness has been awakened to the same life. He finds it in the personal life of every Christian, great and small, illustrious and obscure, in every age, in the collective soul of all Christendom. This experience first of all took place in the consciousness of Jesus Christ, and from Him has been shed abroad in every conscience which has a sense both of spiritual misery and of reconciliation with the Father by faith in the good news of His infinite love." "Religions of Authority," etc. pp. 361-2.

Note 17. Page 38.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

For a discussion of the principle of authority see *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, pp. 80, *et seq.*, by John Clifford. James Clarke & Co. "One must either follow authority or else fact, inspiration, reason. One cannot first accept an authority and then carefully prescribe the limits within which it is infallible. If one makes a vow to a particular Christian organisation, one must obey it, even when one thinks it wrong: otherwise one has all the disadvantages of individualism in addition to those of authority. When one surrenders one can only make such terms as the victor chooses to allow, and trust to his clemency to carry them out."—*Hibbert Journal*, Vol, III., p. 136, Prof. Percy Gardner on M. Loisy's Type of Catholicism. Cf., "Authority and Infallibility," by J. H. Bernard. *Expositor*, VI. Series. Vol. xii. p. 172.

LECTURE II.

The Sources : The Ideas of Jesus.

The Christian Religion arose from an indisputably historical person, a Jewish peasant, known to history as Jesus of Nazareth.

No doubt it has affinities with other religions ; indeed, with most of the religions of the world ; but in its origin it was almost exclusively related to that religion out of which the official Judaism of Palestine in the first century was created, and in which Jesus was trained as a youth. Hebraism, rather than the Judaism of Jerusalem, was the cradle of the religion of Christ.

Every religion is related to some, at least, of the religions going before it. A true religious genius absorbs what is purest and noblest in those preceding faiths with which he is related, and incorporates it with the product that bears his name. Mosaism, from which in the main both Judaism and

Hebraism issued, although it never had breathed into it the soul of the religion of Egypt, that is, its faith in the life that never died, is not without traces of the influence of Egyptian thought.[1] Prophetism did not hesitate to borrow some of its symbols from the religion of Assyria.[2] Buddha appropriated the contents of the Brahminical Religion.[3] The Koran is rich in the facts and ideas of the Old Testament ; and Christianity is in strict succession to the higher teaching of the Seers and Psalmists of the Hebrew Scriptures.

But though Jesus stands in close relation to a historic people and a historic faith, His religion is not secondary and derivative, but original and independent. He takes up and weaves into the

[1] Mosaism, with its doctrine of the Unity of God and its intensely practical and work-a-day ethics, is the fount of the Religion of Israel. Prophetism is one controlling stream of the religious life of the Hebrews. Judaism is the formal and organized religion which became dominant in the century before Christ. Hebraism is that combination of prophetism and Mosaism seen in the periods of Israel's purest religious life. Cf., Hastings' B.D., Sanday, vol. ii., p. 205—605. Buhl, vol. v., p. 52, et seq. Kautzsch, vol. v., p. 624, et seq.

[2] Cf. Old Testament Prophecy, by A. B. Davidson, D.D., L.L.D., pp. 72—445. T. and T. Clark. But Cf. Kautzsch, Religion of Israel. Hastings' B.D., v., p. 650, et seq.

[3] Fairbairn, Philosophy of the Christian Religion, p. 529.

web of the new Teaching certain strands of prophetic thought ; but the web has a beauty and fascination all its own. He accepts the ideas of the prophets ; but He makes those ideas live in new forms, fires them with spiritual passion, gives them a transcendent and conquering energy, and so they achieve new and ampler results.

The Christian Religion is not more certainly historic than is its Founder Himself. Indeed, it gains its historicity from its relation to His definite appearance and activity in human development. Christianity is the creation of the Christ of history. That is not likely to be questioned by any fairly informed mind. Jesus has an assured place in time. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate ; and Pontius Pilate was the Procurator of Judæa and Samaria in the latter part of the eighth century of the Roman Empire, from the year 26 to the year 36 in our era. Pontius Pilate is a character in Roman History as Cromwell is in English, and Luther in German. His name is not only in our gospels ; it is also in the annals of Rome. He is a Roman ; the only Roman ruler "who knew Jesus after the flesh," but who did know Him ; and in Pontius Pilate imperial Rome is present at the founding

of the Christian Religion.

The fundamental, the vital thing is, that Jesus did His work for the world in the world. He was introduced to His ministry by John the Baptizer, a religious reformer, who stirred the consciences of the people of Jerusalem to penitence, and stung them into the confession of their sins, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, that is between the nineteenth of August, 28, A.D., (the second year of the governorship of Pilate) and the nineteenth of August, 29. His courageous and searching speech compelled the hatred of the preachers and teachers of Judaism, disturbed the aristocratic priestly families who monopolised the priesthood of the national religion, and offended the Pharisaic Puritans, so that they persecuted Him and plotted against Him, and at last secured His death by crucifixion at Jerusalem ; a death not only described with simplicity and pathos in our New Testament, but expressly referred to by Tacitus, the historian who lived under the Emperors Vespasian and Titus, Domitian and Trajan.

Thus we stand on the granite of historical fact, when we say, that the founder of Christianity lived ; and that the things concerning Him happened, not

in a corner, but out in the open of the great Roman Empire.[4]

II.

Now it is an accepted principle of the Science of Comparative Religion that the founder of a religion knows the religion he creates, its principles and aims, its ideas and ideals ; and that therefore if we wish to know what that religion is, we must appeal to him ; to his words, so far as we can obtain them : to his purposes and character ; to his spirit and influence ; and accept that evidence as ultimate and authoritative.

Therefore, we begin our request for certainty as to the character and contents of the Christian Religion by an appeal to Jesus. Without Him the Religion could not have been. He is His religion as well as its creator ; in Him it dwells with all fulness, and its energy passes into the life of the world through the impact of His creative ideas and spirit. We must therefore know Him ! Not His words alone, but His words as Himself

[4] "The Communion of the Christian with God," by Prof. Wilhelm Herrmann, p. 71. Williams and Norgate, 1895. Dr. Margoliouth. "The Historical Character of Jesus of Nazareth. Expositor, Sixth Series, Vol, 10, p. 401."

articulate. Not His deeds alone, but His deeds as Himself embodied ; not His aims alone, but His aims as Himself projected into the future ; not His character alone, but His character as an influence on the development of His religion. We have to listen to Him. His personal history must be studied, and His voice must be heard before and above all others. Historical Science says, *Ecce Homo.* See Him in His habit as He lived. It may be only a fragment of the life that is supplied, and only a few of His words that are left; it may be that the story of His career is obscure in its beginning, and without any real end ; but whatever there is, is the surest and most authoritative guide to His religion.

This then is our task :—

(1) To discover Jesus Himself, the supreme Person of the Christian Religion ; the Man, the full Man, the creative Man.

(2) To find Him in and through His formative and dominating ideas and ends.

(3) To follow Him through the effect He produces upon the minds of His contemporaries ; chiefly as He is seen amongst His friends and intimate companions, but also, as far as may be,

in the stir and struggle with His opponents ; and

(4) Lastly, to trace Him in the spiritual impact He gives to the intellect and conscience and will of individuals ; the heroes He creates, the literature He inspires, the institutions He builds, and the persistent influence He exerts on humanity.

III.

But where shall we go for our facts ?

Where, except to the New Testament ?

Yes, but here the question confronts us : Is the New Testament reliable ? Do its documents satisfy the legitimate demands of modern historical research ? Can we get at the witnesses and cross-examine them ? What about its sources ? Are they sufficient to satisfy the historic habit of mind ?

Fortunately, we are not the first to raise these enquiries. For half a century the court has been opened, and the trial of the New Testament documents has been proceeding under the most strenuous and rigorous counsel, gathered from Germany and England, from France and Scotland, from Holland and the United States of America ; and though it is premature to say that the final

verdict has been given, yet the speeches of the judges already delivered concerning the New Testament, leave us little room for doubt as to what that judgment is likely to be.

(1) It is certain that nearly the whole of the work attributed to Paul is really his own. "The most recent German criticism treats all the Pauline Epistles as genuine except the Pastorals, and these it regards as worked up from Pauline materials."[5] Now, these letters were produced by him within the narrow space of twelve or thirteen years, from 49 or 50 to 62, A.D.[6] Harnack places the first letter to the Thessalonians within the first half of the first century, and Lightfoot does not fix its appearing later than 53, and allows it may be carried back to the year 52 ; so that we have a large body of writings of the utmost evidential value, carrying us within a quarter of a century of the appearing and work of the Founder of the Christian Religion ; writings whose claims to authenticity have been canvassed over and over

[5] Sanday's "Outlines of the Life of Christ," p. 263.

[6] Dr. Moffat fixes the appearance of the Pauline literature within the years 50 and 62, and includes notes to Timothy and Titus, as well as the genuine Epistles. "Historical New Testament," pp. 121, et seq.

again, only to be more completely vindicated the more laboriously and remorselessly they were examined.

That is a historical fact of immeasurable value and fruitfulness.

(2) As to the Synoptical Gospels, Dr. Sanday once more expresses the conviction, which he believes continued investigation will confirm, that the great mass of the synoptic gospels had assumed its permanent shape not later than the decade, 60 to 70, A.D.; and that the changes which it underwent after the great catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem were but small, and can without difficulty be recognized.[7] What is exactly meant by the phrase, "the great mass of the Synoptic Gospels" and how it is to be interpreted, I cannot say; but it is certain that the findings of the critics gravitate at an increasing rate towards far earlier dates than were accepted thirty years ago. In fact, there is an increasing consensus of opinion, making it impossible for us to doubt that we have very solid historical ground on which to plant our feet, that we are dealing with

[7] "Outlines of the Life of Christ," by W. Sanday, D.D. Second Edition, 1906, p. 4.

men who are mostly authors, and not merely editors and compilers; and often with the witness himself, and in other cases either with the first-hand reporter, or with a careful and painstaking student of historical material.

John Mark, it is agreed, is setting down what Peter speaks in his own vivid and picturesque fashion; and so is reporting the story of an eye-witness from the beginning, who, as a teacher, has been telling the enquiring disciples what he knew about the Man, Christ Jesus, His words and deeds. His is probably the original gospel; the first response to the demand that grew up, quite naturally, that the oral reports of the short sayings and striking apothegms of Jesus and of His wonderful works, should be set down for the use of the Churches. Thus the transition from the oral stage to the documentary was effected by Mark in what is called his "Gospel."[8]

[8] Dr. Moffat says "The priority of Mark to other Gospels, is generally accepted." "Historical New Testament," p. 262. That means that "the central current of evangelic tradition," flows from a Petrine source, 263. If any "written sources" have been used in compiling this sacred Gospel, they are of quite a subordinate character as compared to the original mass of narrative. The date of this Gospel is from 64 to 67, p. 268.

Votaw holds that the Aramaic oral stage lasted from 30 to 45, and that Matthew set out the Logia in Aramaic form between 50 and 60.[9] That is a conjecture, but it seems highly probable that in writing his gospel, Matthew built on Mark, appropriated much of his material and illustrated and enriched his account of the mighty deeds by the "wise sayings" of the Son of David, the Son of Abraham; gathered either from a compilation of his own, or from one put together by another hand.[10]

But Luke, the companion of Paul, makes the nearest approach in his work to the methods of the modern historian. He is a writer of special culture. He is a physician, and has learnt how to observe, to "diagnose" or deal with what a medical man calls his "case" in a scientific way. He has sought far and near for his material; and what he has put down has been subjected to enquiry, "tested," as we say. He is clearly most careful as to the historical basis of his record, as

[9] "Hastings' Bible Dictionary," Vol. v., p. 6.

[10] "Dr. Moffat's Historical New Testament," p. 265. "A fair range for its composition would be the period 75—90, A.D."

well as most artistic in setting out his story. He goes to the sources, gets behind the statements, and obtains information not given by Mark or Matthew or John. He has a large plan, and his aim is to fill it in. His programme is to trace Christianity from its start to his own day; to secure the fleeting tradition and fix it for those in distant parts of the Roman Empire.[11]

(3) Clement, of Alexandria, reports a saying handed down from the elders of former times, that "John last of all perceiving that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a Spiritual Gospel."[12] That tradition is in a fair way of winning the assent of our scholars. Long and laborious investigations, together with discovery of ancient writings, like the Gospel of St. Peter, and Tatian's 'Fourfold Gospel,' or 'Diatessaron,' cannot be said to have quenched all doubt concerning its authorship and dates; but certainly the accepted verdict is more abundantly endorsed than at any time since the beginnings of critical enquiry; and such an eminent authority on texts as Dr. Rendel Harris

[11] See Note Page 84. [12] See Note Page 85.

affirms, that it is easy to believe that "the Fourth Gospel is substantially what it pretends to be, a message not from an anonymous attaché of the philosophy current in Alexandria, but from the man that leaned on Jesus' breast"; and he even adds, that in the matter of genuineness and authenticity "the Gospel of John to-day stands the firmest of the four;" and the Rev. David Smith goes so far as to declare that the traditional date "is practically conceded"; and that even the twenty-first chapter which is so often disposed of as a later addition by another hand, must be accepted, in agreement with Drummond, Sanday and Lightfoot, as an appendix from the Apostle himself.

Then to sum up, it is not too much to say, that the literary and historical criticism which was expected to be so disastrous to the documentary basis of the Christian Religion, has proved that we have adequate and authentic sources of evidence. The Christian Religion stands on the rock of fact. Here and there a decoration is removed, but the foundation standeth sure. Doubt is vanishing. Suspicion is on the wane. In 1896, Harnack asserted that the Second Epistle of Peter is the only New Testament book put forward under an

assumed name, although he intimated that some qualifications require to be supplied as to the genuineness of two or three other books. In the decade which has elapsed since, mists have been cleared away, clouds lifted, and the literary rock is seen to be more than ever secure, so that it cannot be questioned that in these writings there is an abundance of material rewarding the examination of the seeker for the truth of history, as to the character and aims, spirit and work of the Founder of the Christian Religion.[13]

IV.

But a further question arises. How far is the portrait of Jesus in these Gospels taken from life, and how far from imagination? Is the image of Jesus wholly due to fact, or partly to fact and partly to faith? Have we the Founder of the Christian Religion as He actually appeared in Palestine in the essential soul of Him; in the words He spoke, in the ideas He promulgated, and the works He wrought, or as He came to be conceived by the first Christian community in the glow of their affection and the passionate

[13] See Note Page 86.

enthusiasm of their newly inspired devotion.

(1) The allegation is that the faith and fancy of the primitive Christian Society working upon the tradition that was circulated from teacher to taught, through the oral stage of our Gospels, produced not the whole Jesus as we see Him in these writings, but what may be described as the "supernatural" qualities and features of the Christ; and so the "great central figure of the world's drama" is made to appear to us, not as He did to the Jews; not as the real Jesus He was, but as He *seemed* to the fond and clinging hearts of those over whom He had cast His conquering spell.

Here for example, "is an instance of the faith of the community working upon the tradition." Matthew reports the utterance of Jesus, "Everyone who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew x., 32). Later in his Gospel he gives the "more comprehensive utterance," "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds." "Thus," says Bousset, "as the tradition was handed down

by His community, Jesus was gradually removed from the position of a simple witness for His followers before God's tribunal to that of the actual Judge of the world. Supported by this piece of evidence, we shall be justified in holding all those passages in which Jesus appears as the Judge of mankind, to be the dogmatism of the Christian community and not the opinion of Jesus Himself." [14] So that it comes to this, that we have in these Gospels both a real and an unreal Jesus, the Jesus of fact, and the Jesus of imagination, the Jesus of reality, and the Jesus of the primitive Christian community as reported and edited by the writers of our Gospels.

(2) Now, we must admit that it is not impossible that the faith and fervour of the first disciples have modified, transformed and added to the tradition as it came from the circles of Christ's immediate disciples. It is not necessary to question this. The illusions of love are the facts of history, and not less, the illusions of hate. Emotions wrap their disguises over the body of fact until we can scarcely recognize it. The faith of the disciple gilds and colours the image of the

[14] "Jesus," by W. Bousset, p. 205. Williams & Norgate, 1906.

Master so that we fail to see His face as it appeared to men. The malignant persecution of Cromwell's foes hid the real man from the gaze of his countrymen for two centuries; and Carlyle and Gardiner, notwithstanding, it hides him still from the eyes of many of our contemporaries. The reckless admiration of the soldiers of Napoleon lifted him to a pinnacle of greatness from which the more sober and accurate thinking of subsequent generations will dislodge him. The historian comes with the winnowing fan in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; he will gather his wheat of truth and fact "into the garner, but the chaff"—of unreality—"will he burn up with unquenchable fire."

(3) For, be it remembered, those additions to fact, the historians tell us, follow certain laws; the modifications made by the creative faith, and the fervid imaginations of disciples, and the antagonisms of opponents are found to obey certain definite principles. The persecutor invests the object of his hatred with qualities entirely foreign to the nature and aims of the man he defames; thus he makes Cromwell an impossible demon, and places himself out of court as a witness

by the vehement falseness of his accusations. The disciple, on the other hand, surrounds his master with a spectacular magnificence, an external and meretricious glory, a flimsy and gaudy covering that the original would despise. So that if there are admixtures in our Gospel story, it will not be difficult to tell where Jesus ceases and where the editor or reporter begins; where we are listening to the voice of the great Teacher, and where we have the echo of the community. Provided that we face the fact of Christ in these documents, frankly and fearlessly, taking nothing for granted, and setting down nothing from our pre-suppositions, holding nothing back through bias, but seeing the fact steadily, and seeing it whole, we shall be able to keep severely apart, the Christ of history, and the Christ of faith, and only join them where they are radically and undeniably one.

(4) For these additions, it appears from the cases cited, are not made to the purely spiritual and moral elements; not to His character; not to the essential soul of Jesus; they are additions of function; for example, such as this Judgeship of the world—and not to anything connected with His

deepest life, with the mighty motive forces of His being, the heroism in the domain of will, "the restrained strength, the pent up wealth, His calmness in the midst of storm, the harmony He produces from the most jarring discords." Allow the historian, for the sake of argument, to take out of our Gospels all the alleged products of the primitive Christian community, and what do you lose? First, the dramatic appearance of Christ as Judge of the world; but not the fact that He was set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; for a sign which is spoken against; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed; and again, not the fact that Jesus often acted as a very real and stern Judge of men in the days of His flesh; nor as is confessed, do we part with the fact that He taught and healed; for His healing activity lies entirely within the bounds of what is pyschologically conceivable, and this feature of the life of Jesus has, in the judgment of our critics, nothing absolutely unique about it. And, still further, His teaching abides in its purity and fulness.

Again, we are told we must allow that Christ did not use the phrase, "Son of Man" as a "regular and constant self-designation"; but only "briefly

and sparingly, and not until the end of His life" ; still, the whole of His unique moral teaching remains. His Gospel of "ethical liberation," having "in its centre" the belief in the release and unfettering of the will for good by the forgiveness of sins is left ; and, most important of all, He is left. "And this nature of His is sound to the core. In spite of all its inwardness, there is not a trace of emotional excess. In spite of all the intensity of devotion, there is nothing of ecstasy or visions. Apocalyptic dreams take no hold on His soul. What He says is, as it were, all of a piece—it comes up spontaneously, clear as crystal, out of His soul. For Him there are no ifs and buts. He finds at once the decisive point. In His mind the most intricate questions resolve themselves as if by magic. . . . We may see from many of these traits, that in the nature of Jesus there was no lack of contrasts. But they are always resolved in the wonderful completeness and harmony of His being. The opposites are always in equilibrium. Therefore His personality, many-sided as it is, is not complicated. In the last resort they are not indeed so many independent qualities ; but, strictly speaking, under the

action of His human nature and its surroundings, they are just so many prismatic rays in the diamond of His soul." [15]

With Christ *Himself* in our possession, we can calmly test everything that is alleged to be an "addition" to the real Jesus made by the primitive Christian community, and accept the result.

(5) But we may also add the familiar argument that wonderful as are the achievements of faith, fancy and affection, they have their literary limitations and impossibilities. There are some things they cannot do. They cannot create Hamlet or Othello. They could not have created the Christ of the Gospels. Dr. Fairbairn has set out this answer with unsurpassed force and brilliance in his "Philosophy of the Christian Religion." [16] He writes, "We may say then that were the Gospels inventions, whether mythical or conscious, spontaneous or purposed, they would be the most marvellous creations of literary art which we possess. The underlying idea is majestic, sublime,

[15] Translated from Baron von Soden's "Die Wichtigsten Fragen im Leben Jesu," pp. 85—88. Sanday's "Outlines of the Life of Christ," pp. 270—271.

[16] p. 353.

complex, but the history which embodies it is simple, sober, sane, while the person in and by whom it is realized, is the most natural and human character in all literature. Present the idea to the mythical faculty, and t would weave out of it a gay and variegated web, as it were a tapestry crowded with the adventures of the faeriest wonderland ; present it to the disciplined imagination, and it would feel that the theme was vaster than it had strength of pinion to carry. But the Evangelists are saved by their very simplicity ; they tell their tale, they report the words of their Master, and then they leave their history and their *logia* to sink into the reason and wake the wonder of men."

V.

Having then cleared the ground as to the complete trustworthiness of our sources for the ideas of Jesus, we may set to work to make ourselves sure as to what Christianity is, and what it is not, so far as this evidence is concerned.

And first, we must hear Paul ; for he is the earliest of the literary witnesses to the historic personality of Jesus, and he is the first literary figure of our New Testament.

Three facts must be briefly noted.

(1) "There is nothing more certain in ancient literature than the authorship of the more important of the Pauline Epistles," and the oldest of his Epistles is written within little more than twenty years after the death of Jesus. But the critical fact for our purpose is, that they were written, not to meet any demand for information concerning Jesus; for that was given orally; but solely to meet the practical difficulties of certain young and immature Christian communities—to guide and stimulate their activities, to feed their heroism in facing persecution, to cheer them in their many afflictions, to uphold their confidence in the Gospel, and to solve their problems of thought and life. The statements we have in these documents concerning Jesus are incidental and inevitable; they are not written with any biographical or historical aim, but introduced in the same way that the facts concerning the early Christians come into the letters of Pliny the younger, or the information about Olney and Newton in the epistles of Cowper.

(2) Nor is it unimportant to set down the fact that Paul was not one of the leaders of the Church

at Jerusalem. He was built on a larger plan than they were. His equipment as a scholar was more complete than theirs. He was the most extraordinary religious genius of his age. His was a freer mind, and more bent on applying accepted principles to universal facts. He knew the old religion as they did not ; had worked at it as they had not. He was a "zealot" in the Jews' religion beyond many of his contemporaries, and had estimated its inadequacy with the utmost exactness. He knew nothing of timidity. It was natural to him to be bold. He was unconsciously fearless and heroic. He could not be otherwise. His religion was his master, and he must serve it with his whole soul. Therefore the leaders of the primitive community were a little doubtful about him. They suspected him. He had made mistakes before ; notably in the fiery rage with which he had persecuted them ; might he not be mistaken now ? He would not yield to what he regarded as their narrowness. "To them he gave place by subjection ? No, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might not be damaged." He differed from them, and he was opposed and thwarted ; and some of his teaching was cordially

disliked. It was radical, universal; and so the validity of his Gospel was subjected to public tests, as to whether it was, or was not, in harmony with the faith of the primitive community; and it was reluctantly concluded, though clearly not without misgiving, that its fruits were so manifestly in accordance with the mind of Christ, that it could not be condemned; and so "they held their peace and glorified God," saying of the Gentiles who were the fruit of Paul's ministry, "We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in like manner as they."

But it should be remembered that, in all these differences there was not the slightest dispute as to the facts of Christianity; but only as to their interpretation and application; none as to the history, but only as to the ministry of the Gospel, and its range; so that every historical statement and allusion in his writings, comes to us with the greatest weight.

(3) Catechising Paul again, we find that although the revelation made to him was of the risen and glorified Christ—the Lord of the Ages, his testimony to *facts* like the Resurrection of Christ, is given *after* sifting and arranging the

witness borne by others. Of these, one was Cephas, the other James, and these were the two, and the only two, of the leaders he saw, when he made his special visit to the Holy City, for the sake of conferring with the Jerusalem chiefs. Paul does not trust to his spiritual experience for his historical facts; he goes to appropriate sources of evidence at once. His references, therefore, to the principal events in the history of Jesus, are not what Newman would call, "ventures of faith"; but declarations based on evidence he has himself tested and accepted. He has, at least in germ, if not in full development, the historical "sense," and follows the historical method.

Hence, whether Paul "knew Christ after the flesh" or not, we have a witness of immense value to the facts of the Christian Religion. I know we have much more in Paul than the bare facts. There is a large original element of thought and interpretation. He supplies the main lines of his teaching. He explains Christ. He advises the "brethren." Moreover, there is much in the Gospels we miss in Paul. But we see Christ Himself; His portrait is there, and we cannot make any mistake either about its features,

or its actuality. It is universally confessed that the most trenchant critisism leaves his testimony unshaken. Now that testimony is briefly as follows :—Jesus is born of a woman, and born under the law. He is in the line of royal descent, "great David's greater Son." He belonged to a family and had brothers ; and that family was in poor circumstances. He lived in the form of a servant, shorn of all majesty and worldly pomp. "He pleased not Himself." He was despised and persecuted. He was put to death on the Cross. He was buried, and He rose again. His words were full of wisdom. With one of His sayings Paul enforced the counsel he gave to the elders of Ephesus. But chiefly his thought is swayed by the moral and spiritual qualities of Jesus ; His simplicity and openness of mind, His gentleness of spirit and winsomeness of mien, His unfeigned humility and gracious condescension, His ready acceptance of the most sordid conditions of human living, His heroic obedience to the will of God in face of the shameful death of crucifixion.[17]

[17] Cf. "St. Paul, the Man and his Work," by Prof. H. Weinel. Williams and Norgate, 1906. "The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ," by R. J. Knowling, D.D. Hodder & Stoughton,

Looking, then, into the writings of Paul by themselves, we see Jesus in history, His place in time, His relations to the institutions of Israel, His mental and spiritual achievements. The obedient and suffering life is there. The wonderful Person is there. The unique character is there. Jesus is seen at work. He is crucified. He is buried. He is raised from the dead. He makes the greatest Man of the century. He recreated the spiritual and moral world.

Our feet stand fast within the impregnable fortresses of historical realities. Paul is an incontestable witness for the Nazarene.

VI.

But Paul's witness does not supply us with much evidence concerning the "words of Jesus." He only quotes one saying, and, though he may have used the parables of the Master in his preaching, he does not cite them in his letters; therefore, *to find the regulative ideas of Jesus* we must appeal to the words of the Gospels.

But may we trust those words? Are these

1905. "The Historic Christ," by T. A. Lacey. Longmans, Green & Co., 1905.

sentences really His? Or did Matthew invent them for Him? Is it John who is speaking in Jesus' name?

To those questions a brief answer must be given.

(1) Jesus Himself did not write a line. He is not the Founder of a Book Religion. Moreover, He had no reporters; and we have very few of the actual words that fell from His lips in our Gospels; for Jesus habitually taught in Aramaic and not in Greek, and our original Gospels are in Greek. Votaw says, "It is certain the memorabilia of Jesus were originally, and for some years in the Aramaic language"; [18] but the foremost authority on this subject, Professor Dalman affirms, "What is firmly established is only the fact that Jesus spoke in Aramaic to the Jews, and that the original apostolic band at the beginning preached concerning Him—though not exclusively—in that language." [19]

Now we have no primitive Aramaic Gospel, and it does not seem likely that one was written

[18] "Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. V., p. 5.

[19] "The Words of Jesus considered in the light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language," p. 71.

at the outset; nor have we a primitive Hebrew Gospel; and it is not certain that one was produced before the appearance of a Gospel in Greek. An Aramaic background may be claimed for the evangelical accounts, but it does not prove the existence of the Gospel in the Aramaic language.

So then we are reduced to this, that we have no more than a dozen or so of the actual words spoken by Jesus; and we have to trust for what we know of His ideas to their translation into Greek.[20]

(2) Nor is this all; we must add that, of necessity, Jesus had to take up the thought-forms of His day and use them as the means of conveying His ideas to His hearers. That was unavoidable, and due to the mere fact that He belonged to His own age, and was addressing men who could not be reached by any other route. He was a preacher to the people; a preacher in the open air, from the edge of the boat on the lake, from a boulder or a mountain, or standing in the streets of the cities and villages. He used the Synagogue occasionally, but He had

[20] See Note Page 86.

no preference for it; He took His texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, but also from the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, and though He was fresh and original in His thoughts, yet He finds the best vehicles for his ideas in the customs and laws and language of the people. All this must be allowed for in the interpretation of His words, but it does not in any way invalidate them as the organs for revealing His mind. We may, if we will use our common sense, and obey the laws of interpretation accepted in similar cases, make ourselves sure of what He wants to say.[21]

(3) Again, we must add the necessity of taking account of the moulding influence of the memory, of style, and of the possible bias of the editorial hand. Dr. Chase, the Bishop of Ely, reminds us that "too often in the past the practice of theologians has been to assume that in a particular saying the very words of Christ have been reproduced, and on the frail foundation of that assumption to build a superstructure of doctrine guaranteed by the sure authority of the Truth Himself." [22] That is a danger we are bound to avoid. We must keep in view the indisputable

[21] See Note Page 87.

fact that our authors have so reported the words of Jesus that their individual apprehension of them, their temperament, their education, their outlook, their mode of expression, have a certain ascertainable influence. It is so in all literature, and therefore in this; and yet no historian shrinks from the investigation of his data on those accounts. He knows how to avoid laying emphasis on the unessential details in his material, and to seize the leading and permanent ideas, and present them in their coherence at once with the whole, and with the character of the speaker.

(4) I ought not to pass over the daring utterance of Schmiedel, that we have only nine genuine words of Jesus in our Synoptic Gospels.[23] That statement will be judged by some so violent as to place him out of court as a critical witness. But extreme men should be fairly heard. We ought to ask, "What are those elect sayings"? They are declared to form "the foundation pillars for a truly scientific life." Five of them are "absolutely credible passages about Jesus in general."

[22] "Cambridge Theological 'Essays." Edited by Dr. H. B. Swete. p. 387.

[23] Schmiedel. "Encyclopædia Biblica." pp. 1881-1883.

They ought therefore to help us in our search. Where are they? Here is the first. "No one is good, save God only." And therefore Jesus refuses to be called good. That is a negative statement, and does not help us much, when carried back to its original setting and interpreted by the conditions under which it was uttered; but it may afford a glimpse of the presuppositions which prompt the choice of this "particular foundation pillar." A second passage is that in which Jesus says, "the blasphemy against the Son of Man shall be forgiven"; a third is the assertion of the relatives of Jesus that He was "beside Himself"; a fourth is the paragraph in which Jesus confesses His ignorance of the day and hour of the great world-crisis, which is only known to the Father; and yet in that saying it should not be forgotten that He is pictured by the writer as representing Himself as *the Son*, as placing Himself *above* the angels; and the fifth word is the piercing cry forced from the suffering Saviour on the Cross—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me"?

The remaining four relate to the "miracles of Jesus." The first of the four refers to His refusal

to give a sign of His power merely to gratify the curiosity of His opponents; the second to His failure to work wonders at Nazareth because of the unbelief of the people; the third is the warning against the leaven of the Pharisees, and of Herod, which, it is suggested, is as it were the title of a parable turned into a miracle; and the last is the message to the Baptist concerning the Messiahship of Jesus.

Instantly the reader demands the reasons for the election of these "nine passages" and the rejection of all the rest. What are they? Is it because they say so little, and shut out so much? Is it that they are chiefly negative, and give us no clear and coherent set of ideas? Is it that they merely tell us that He knew His limitations, the conditions for the outflow of His power, the tragedy of His sufferings, and the blind criticisms of His power? Are these the "foundation pillars" for a truly scientific life of Jesus? Do they offer room enough for the superstructure we see in the Gospels? Have they more right to hold that fundamental position than the words, "A doctor goes to the sick; so I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners"; or that saying,

"Think not that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil"; or again, that counsel of perfection, "Be ye also perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect"; and scores more that might be quoted. Are not these as true to Jesus as the passages cited by Schmiedel? Are they not in keeping with His character? Do they not help to make a coherent whole? And would not large breadths of His Being remain inarticulate if they were excluded? Does not the witness of Paul rise up in judgment against this method of selection and rejection? Can we for one moment believe that the primitive Christian community reared its vast proportions on such a narrow ledge of teaching, and became, as it did, the delightful home of so great a company of saints and heroes?

No, we have a broader and surer basis on which to rest our confidence. Our Gospels, when every deduction has been made, give us the regal ideas of Jesus. They are indubitably here. The form they take may be rugged or broken; but the soul of them breathes through. The vessel is

of potter's clay, but it holds truth.

> "It were to be wished the flaws were fewer
> In the earthen vessel holding treasure,
> Which lies as safe in a golden ewer.
> But the main thing is, does it hold good measure?
> Heaven soon sets right all other matters."

There is the capital fact. We have the mind of Christ in these Gospels. The ideas of Jesus are here; and ideas are our real world; not words. Words are only the machines in which ideas ride to power and service. Ideas have hands and feet. Ideas have momentum as well as reality. They rule. They shape the man. They create institutions. They are the source of revolutions. A man is as his ideas. As he thinks, so is he. It is far more important to get at his thoughts than at the details of his career, the date of his birth, and the names of the places he has visited. His ideas express his inward self. They contain his message in its true inwardness. It is by Buddha's ideas we reach the substance of Buddhism. Luther is disclosed in the ideas with which he revolutionized Europe. So Jesus is seen in His creative originality in His ideas. He acts on mind, and through the mind on will. "Change your point of view," was His exhortation at the outset of His mission.

We cannot know His Religion without knowing His ideas. Now, the ideas of Jesus as Teacher and Worker, as the Founder of a new Religion, are authoritatively presented to us in these writings. We may find them if we will. We may make ourselves sure of what He taught and what He wished His followers to teach. This is indisputable. It is not for me to say at this stage what they are; that comes later; but after this examination of the whole situation, I claim that it is possible for anyone to certify himself as to what are the authoritative ideas of the Christian Religion according to the teaching of its Founder. Conviction may be had, an assured conviction of what is and what is not the "mind of Christ."

(1) As to God, and the actual character of His rule; a rule not to be judged by the evanescent social shapes it may create, but by the moral elevation, the spiritual endowment it brings, the increase of energy for moral purposes it imparts.

(2) As to Man, his condition, incalculable value and measureless possibilities;

(3) As to Life and the very chance of it, a prize of unspeakable worth;

(4) As to Duty, what it is, and how it ought to be, and may be, discharged ;

(5) As to self-realisation in its highest forms by the sacrifice of the lower self ;

(6) As to the intrinsic spirituality of all acceptable worship ;

And (7) as to the spirit of sweet forgivingness being a perpetual obligation in all human relations.

These things, and similar things, are here. Men have found them, and been made new men by them ; men may still find them, and be as absolutely convinced that they are the ideas of Jesus as they are sure that they live and think.[24]

VII.

But in this quest for the formative ideas of the Founder of the Christian Religion, must we restrict ourselves to New Testament sources ? Are no others available ? And, if so, are we not at liberty to use them ?

(1) The Science of Religion assures us that the idea and the personality of the Founders of Religion are the two constitutive factors in

[24] See Note Pages 87, 88.

the creation of a religion. They give it vitality, guard its integrity, protect it against alien elements, supply the test for correcting departures from its nature and aims, and ought to control its development. The greatest care, therefore, both in the interests of the religion and of truth, is demanded in the answer we give to this question.

(2) And we may start by reminding ourselves that no religion has a wider outlook upon, or a heartier welcome for, the whole realm of the good, the beautiful, and the true, than the Religion of Jesus.[25] It is as broad as humanity, and as wide as life. Its inclusions are most catholic ; its exclusions are few. Nothing that is human is alien to it. Everything that is divine gathers under its wide-spreading wings. Its marvellous absorbent power is its glory and its burden. It resents the slightest restriction of the area of investigation, and says, prove, test all things. Never quench the spirit. Do not think meanly of the utterances of prophetic souls. Count it a crime to let the

[25] "In law, in order, and in power, I find the Christian faith at the centre of things, expanding to include all else." "An Agnostic's Progress," by W. S. Palmer. *Contemporary Review*. Vol. 1906. January.

truth slip. Be careful of the small dust of the gold of God.

Jesus frankly appropriated the good in the thought, the institutions, and the life of the time. All was not new; like a wise Master-Teacher, He brought old things out of His storehouse as well as new. But He rejected far more than He elected; for Palestine was oppressed by the false and insincere, the hollow and hypocritical, the casuists' puerile refinings, and the ascetics' honest and fatal mistakes.

And the New Testament breathes the same catholic spirit; it lingers with love over the "many other things which Jesus did" and said, which are not written in its books; and in like manner the Christian welcomes the discovery of the *Didaché* and the *Logia*, watches and waits for the "lost halves of the beatitudes," and for long-buried traces of those "faithful sayings" current in the primitive Church, and so, "worthy of all acceptation," that the writers of the New Testament would rise at once and say, "Come in, thou offspring of the Christ, wherefore standest thou without?" It deals with Christianity as a whole, in its entire development, and does not stop short with the

last letter of its alphabet.

(3) But it must protect its own life. By its inherent vitality and indestructible freedom it refuses to be imprisoned. The supreme rights of the Founder must be kept intact. He must reign in His own Religion. "Jesus," says Amiel, "will always supply us with the best criticism of Christianity." He does supply that "criticism"; and for the sake of His Religion, and for our own sakes, we are bound to use it. His rights are sacred and must be guarded irom invasion. Philosophy may underpin the edifice of His Religion, explicate its contents, demonstrate its fundamental harmony with the reason and experience of man, but it must not obsess and dominate it, to the exclusion of the Lord of the home. It must not cut the nerve of the authoritative ideas found in the original resources. It must not, like the European dodder in its parasitical growths, strangle that on which it feeds. General history, too, will reveal, develop, amplify, and justify its contents; but it must not be confounded with the specific sources of the constituent units which make up the Christian faith, nor will it guarantee that everything which secures the label of the

Christian name is in accord with the primitive idea, the original purpose. The misletoe is on the oak, but it is not the oak; it may even embroider the oak with beauty, still it is not the oak; and unless the oak be permanently strong, it may imperil its strength, if not its life. That is the one sound, sure, and fundamental principle of criticism that must control all our studies of what is called the "development" of the Christian Religion.

(4) Take one case out of many. Mr. Harold Begbie, writing on *The Happy Christ*, exclaims, "Unhappy Christians! You have watered the earth with tears, you have sown her fields with the blood of persecution. From the cross of your sacrifice you have sawn wood to make thumbscrew and rack; for the vesture of Christ you have cast lots that you might make of it the winding-sheet of knowledge. Rich are your altars with the gifts of frightened children, and full to the overflowing your treasury with the pence of ignorance. Hell has become to you a source of revenue; you lay a tax on the souls of the dead. At the cradle of joy you stand with water that shall save from hell; at the grave of

the mourner you darken grief with the menace of purgatory. Your shadow is over innocence and over sorrow. You make broad your phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of your garments, only that you may the more fearfully and the more impressively remove the blessed Christ from the market-place to the altar. Darkness you have loved more than light; lamentation more than joy. Your hearts are weary and heavy-laden, your necks are bowed under a yoke which is not Christ's. You have learned of Him only litanies and supplications. Your countenances are sad because the Bridegroom is not with you."[26]

Undeniably, then, discrimination is necessary. There are ideas in the current Christianity wholly contrary to the ideas of Jesus Christ. They must be repelled; steadfastly, persistently. They cannot be permitted to usurp His Name and place. They are parasites. They do not belong to the tree He planted. They damage it. It is a duty we owe to truth that we definitely mark them, and make them stand apart, and hold fast those ideas which bear on their front the warrant of the Founder Himself. Only in this way can we make

[26] See Note Page 89.

ourselves sure that we have the essence of the Christian Religion.

NOTE 11. PAGE 52.

THE GOSPELS.

"The Gospels are not "party tracts"; neither are they writings which as yet bear the radical impress of the Greek spirit. In their essential substance they belong to the first, the Jewish epoch of Christianity, that brief epoch which may be denoted as the palæontological. That we possess any reports dating from that time, even though, as is obvious in the first and third Gospel, the setting and the composition are by another hand, is one of those historical arrangements for which we cannot be too thankful. Criticism to-day universally recognises the unique character of the Gospels. What especially marks them off from all subsequent literature, is the way in which they state their facts. This species of literary art, which took shape partly by analogy with the didactic narratives of the Jews, and partly from catechetical necessities—this simple and impressive form of exposition was, even a few decades later, no longer capable of exact reproduction. From the time that the Gospel was transferred to the broad ground of the Græco-Roman world, it appropriated the literary forms of the Greeks, and the style of the evangelists was then felt to be something strange but sublime. When all is said, the Greek language lies upon these writings only like a diaphanous veil, and it requires hardly any effort to retranslate their contents into Hebrew or Aramaic. That the tradition here presented to us is, in the main, at first hand is obvious." Harnack's "What is Christianity," p. 21.

NOTE 12. PAGE 52.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

"Hastings' Bible Dictionary," Vol. ii., p. 235. Dr. J. Rendel Harris, in his popular account of the newly-recovered Gospel of St. Peter, says, referring to the discovery of Tatian's "Four-fold Gospel," or "Diatessaron":—"True it has only come down to us in a time-worn form, through translations; yet it has told us, in unmistakable language, of the place which the Gospel of John had acquired in the estimation of the Church by the middle of the second century, and rendered it easy to believe that the Fourth Gospel is substantially what it pretends to be, a message not from an anonymous attaché of the philosophy current in Alexandria, but from the man that leaned on Jesus' breast. . . . But there are few people as yet who realise how revolutionary this discovery has been in the question of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament records, and how many idle criticisms it has silenced; *the Gospel of John to-day stands the firmest of the four*, and I have been in the habit of telling my students that, in consequence of the attention which has been bestowed upon it, its verified age—*i.e.*, the latest possible date to which it can be referred—goes back a year for every year that it is under examination. For my part, I think it is a matter of thankfulness that some of these questions are being definitely settled, and that conclusions are being reached from which there will be no appeal; but I do not see how they could have been reached in a satisfactory manner except by the recovery of new materials, which is the last thing that some critics give their mind to." Moreover, in this newly-recovered 'Gospel of St. Peter,' written certainly not later than the year 150, there are many particulars given of the crucifixion of our Lord which appear in no other Gospel than that of St. John, proving the existence of St. John's Gospel when this document was written.

Note 13. Page 54.
HARNACK'S LATEST WORD.

Dr. Newton Marshall tells me that in the preface to his latest book, "Lukas der Arzt," dated May 17, 1906, Harnack refers to the statement made in 1896, and quoted here, and asserts that subsequent studies, despite the protests of some writers, had but confirmed it. He says that careful criticism has won back for us the advantage that "we are able to circumscribe much more closely the time and place in which the oldest and fundamental elaborations of the traditions took place; and that not a few wild hypotheses have been thereby excluded. Practically everything that ultimately showed itself, grew and happened within the years 30—70—and that in Palestine, or, more nearly, in Jerusalem. . . This becomes ever clearer and takes the place of the earlier 'critical' opinion that the fundamental development, stretched over a space of about a hundred years," throughout the whole land of the Diaspora. Cf. also "Outlines of the Life of Christ," Sanday, p. 254.

Note 20. Page 70.
THE ARAMAIC GOSPEL.

"Hence arises for literary science, the right and the duty of investigating *in what form the words of Jesus must have been uttered in their original language, and what meaning they had in this form for the Jewish hearers.* Of course absolute certainty in regard to minutiæ cannot possibly be expected concerning the precise form in which these words proceeded from the mouth of Jesus. But it will be recognised with greater certainty than heretofore, how much there is in form and content that is specifically Greek, and what at least may be regarded as most nearly approaching to the original setting. The more one is convinced that the Gospels contain historically trustworthy communications in regard to the teaching of Jesus, the more important must it appear to get even one step nearer to the original by a fresh apprehension of His message in the light of the primary language and the contemporary modes of thought." Ibid., p. 72.

NOTE 21. PAGE 71.

JESUS IN THE GOSPELS.

"I accept the historic Christ, as represented in the Gospels, together with the general account given of His teaching. In so far as the record is not accurate—and even without any knowledge of biblical criticism. we must admit that it is bound to be inaccurate—I consider that the record is likely to be inferior to the reality, that the report of the teachings may have been spoiled and garbled in places, but is not likely to have been improved. Some of these spoilings may have been due to misunderstanding, others to a desire for extra edification; and it is difficult to say which attitude of a transcriber is the more dangerous. A similar view, however, may be held concerning the record of the words of any astounding genius; his contemporaries and immediate successors are not likely to improve upon his teachings; even as mere commentators they may exhibit well-intentioned stupidity; but, if they have to act also as reporters, omission eked out by exaggeration must be prominent, and unconscious misrepresentation is bound to occur." *The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1906, pp. 643, 644. "Christianity and Science," by Sir Oliver Lodge.

NOTE 24. PAGE 78.

THE IDEAS AND WORDS OF JESUS.

In a passage of striking beauty, the Rev. David Smith writes:—"There are no words like them. How they sparkle and glow on the pages of the Gospels! It is neither exaggeration nor irreverence to say that they are embedded in the evangelic narrative like jewels in a setting of base metal. One knows instinctively where Jesus ceases and the Evangelist begins. It is like passing into another atmosphere. In a quiet nook of Scotland lies a little town, remote from the throng of cities and the highways of commerce. It is an old-world place, and certain of its red-tiled and moss-grown dwellings bear dates of the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries over their crumbling lintels. Built here and there into their

rude walls one observes blocks of masonry, broken and defaced, yet skilfully shaped and carved with quaint devices. How comes it that they are found in so unworthy a setting? Hard by stand the grey ruins of an ancient castle which, if tradition be true, sheltered King Robert the Bruce ere he had won Scotland's liberty; and when 'the rude forefathers' of the hamlet were minded to build them dwellings, that venerable pile served them as a convenient quarry. At a glance one recognises those fragments of nobler handiwork amid their alien setting. And even thus do the words of Jesus shine on the pages of the Evangelists. It is indeed indubitable that they have suffered some measure of change, and are not always written precisely as they came from His lips, but the change is generally inappreciable. As they stand on the sacred page, they attest their originality. They are no far-off echoes, but living voices, as fresh and powerful now as when they were first heard by the Sea of Galilee or in the city of Jerusalem. They palpitate with life, they throb with emotion, and they make our hearts to burn within us, reminding us how He said, 'The words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit and they are life' (John vi., 63.) No other than He could have spoken them." "The Days of His Flesh." By the Rev. David Smith, M.A. pp. 42, 43.

THE METHOD OF STUDYING THE GOSPELS.

As to the *aim* and *method* of study, the following statement is suggestive :—"What the right sort of student of Pascal is primarily concerned with is not any verbal or logical parallels between his writings and those of Jansen or Montaigne or Nicole, any more than the right sort of reader of the Gospels is primarily concerned with Talmudic anticipations of the sayings of Christ. The important thing to seize in each case is the unique quality, not what is like other books, but what is unlike; the mysterious power, if we could but get at it, which makes the Gospels move the world, while the Talmud interests

a handful of scholars; which, in a lower sphere, makes Pascal a living voice of all humanity, while Jansen is a dying echo of a dead heresy."—*Times*, Oct. 6, 1905. Review of Pascal.

NOTE 26. PAGE 83.

THE NEED FOR DISCRIMINATION.

That is a popular and not a scientific statement. It is one-sided. It calls for qualification. It errs gravely by omission on the one hand, but hardly by over-emphasis on the other. I cite it because it is sufficient to show that everything that is called Christian is not according to the "mind of Christ. A more measured judgment is expressed by Amiel. It is Oct. 1, 1849; and he writes in his Diary: "Yesterday I read through, and made extracts from the Gospel of St. John. It confirmed me in my belief that about Jesus, we must believe no one but Himself, and that what we have to do is to discover the true image of the Founder behind the prismatic refractions through which it comes to us, and which alter it more or less. . . . I am astounded at the incredible amount of Judaism and formalism which still exists nineteen centuries after the Redeemer's proclamation; it is 'the letter which killeth'—after his protest against a dead symbolism. . . . It is the Church which is heretical, the Church whose sight is troubled and her heart timid." *Amiel's Journal*, Vol. I., p. 5. Macmillan and Co., 1885.

LECTURE III.

The Sources: The Impression made by Jesus on the Men of His Age.

We approach a fresh stratum of evidence in our documents when we enquire into the nature, meaning, and range of the impression produced by the Founder of the Christian Religion upon the mind and character of His age, upon His contemporaries, and especially upon the circle of His immediate disciples and intimates, and upon His opponents.

It is another way at getting at the facts, the real facts, about the Creator of Christianity, and making ourselves sure as to what His Religion is and what it is not.

It is, also, an aid in testing the information we have acquired from the same sources concerning His dominating ideas.

The Science of Comparative Religion uniformly proceeds upon this principle, and with

reason ; for it is a study of effects, and should be a discovery of causes ; of effects on, and in, persons produced by personality, that most wonderful force in all human affairs. The religion-creating man stands before us, revealed in men ; revealed in the springs of his power, and the qualities of his inward life :—Mahomet in Khadija, his wife ; in Seid, his slave ; in Ali, his cousin ; and in the sayings and doings of the earlier Caliphs or rulers, as well as in the Koran. Buddha appears in the mendicant orders he inspires ; in his disciple Ananda, not less than in *the Book of the Great Decease.* Wesley is discoverable in his first preachers and fellow-workers, as well as in his sermons ; Arnold, of Rugby, in the pupils who go forth from Rugby School into positions of leadership in India and the Colonies, not less than in his histories ; Holman Hunt and Rossetti in the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, as well as in their paintings ; and Jesus in Peter, James, and John, and the primitive Christian community, as also in His teachings. In the effect the man produces on other men, we have materials for a true portrait of the man himself.

II.

But no religious reformer is understood on the day of his appearing. He is a root out of a dry ground, and has no beauty that men should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, avoided as a "heretic," cast out of the established religion as a "disturber," prosecuted as an "atheist," and "corrupter of youth," imprisoned as insane, and poisoned or crucified, as "an enemy of the people." But over those few sincere and brave souls, who "out of their falseness reach to the truth of things," he casts a spell they cannot resist. They see his soul, listen to his words, feel his charm, rise up, leave all, follow him, and then go amongst their fellows and say, "Come! See! Here is a Teacher who tells me what I never heard from anyone else; whose message comes like music to my soul! Is not this the man *you* seek? Has he not the words *you* wish to hear?"

Even in free Athens, Socrates spoke to a gainsaying generation; for though liberty had a wide range amongst the Athenian people, it did not extend to the State religion. That was sacred. It must be preserved from attack; therefore, it was held to be necessary to punish the man who

had the courage to tell the people, not what they wished to hear about it and about life's problems, but what he judged they needed to hear. Hence, his indictment declared that "Socrates is guilty of crime: First, in not believing in the gods that the city believes in; secondly, in introducing other new gods; thirdly, in corrupting the youth. The penalty due is death." And his opponents pushed the charge with all their strength, and were backed by the popular prejudice. But how that hostility reveals the man! The tragic poet, Meletus; the rhetorician, Lycon; the democratic leader, Anytus; the judges, the witnesses, the whole trial, make a background on which the portrait of the great thinker is painted in clear and arresting colours. There you see his fine courage, his sweet patience, his resolute devotion to truth, his fight against prejudice, his loyalty to conviction, his sustained "passive resistance," his tenacious grip of principle, and his noble resolve to obey God rather than man.

But it is to his disciples and friends we must go to perfect our conception of the missionary of philosophy; to the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, to

the dialogues of Plato, and to the treatises by Aristotle. Therein we see the effect Socrates produced upon their minds and lives. These books tell us what he thought. They lay bare his methods of thinking and of compelling others to think; they show us the man pertinaciously toiling to deliver men from false thinking. They give us his regal ideas. They disclose the qualities by which he fascinated and held men and swept their intellect to the higher realms of thought. Xenophon reminds us of Mark; Plato of John, and Aristotle of Luke. Xenophon met Socrates in the lane, was forced into conversation with him, heard his call, "Follow me and learn," and instantly became a disciple, had years of close talk with him, kept records of what he heard, and then set them out in his memorials of his master. Plato was a passionate and enthusiastic disciple of the Socratic ideas and the Socratic method, and used them as the vehicle of his own philosophy. Aristotle supplies, in his allusions and statements, the sifted results of his investigations, and enables the student to test the accuracy of the records given by Xenophon and Plato. Xenophon is a soldier who describes what he sees, as he

sees it; but he is an admiring soldier, bent on defending his leader. Plato is a man of abstract thought, an idealist, conscious of a mission, and determined to secure a rational basis for life. Aristotle is a reasoner, and "enables us," writes the Rev. J. T. Forbes, "to say that of the mass of matter put forward in the name of Socrates, certain doctrines belong to the Platonic Socrates, not to the Socrates of history";[1] and then Mr. Forbes concludes in words which accurately describe our present enquiry: "By the use mainly of such criteria as the Aristotelian testimony, the artistic versimilitude of the Xenophontic and Platonic portraits, and the study of the various developments of the Socratic philosophy, a view at once self-consistent and faithful to critically sifted testimony may be gained."

So from this picture of Socrates painted on the minds of his contemporaries by the artist himself, we attain to certitude as to his personality, as well as his ideas, as to his character and career as well

[1] "Socrates," by Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A. pp. 112, 113. In like manner we find in the Fourth Gospel "matter put forward in the name of 'Jesus' which is not wholly due to the Jesus of History, but to the Jesus of the long experience of John."

as his methods of cross-examination. We know something more as to what Socrates is, and what he is not; and what the Socratic philosophy is, and what it is not.

III.

The principle, then, that the mind and character of Jesus may be discovered by their effect on His contemporaries, is sound; but does not the same danger present itself here that we had to face when we were investigating the New Testament report of the Ideas of Jesus, only in a more aggravated form?

For we are not looking into the reports of speeches, but into impressions on minds of varying plasticity and sensitiveness, of different degrees of preparation, and with every variety of confusing content. May we not, therefore, admit elements into original Christianity which are positively alien to its genius, and altogether outside the mind of Christ? Are we not likely to attribute to Him what is due to the limitations of Peter, to the environment of John, or to the prejudices of Matthew? Is it not likely, seeing how vast is the difference between the pupil who receives the impression and the master who makes it; how

immature and untrained these peasants, fishermen, and tax-collectors are ; and what is the unique originality of the speaker that, after all, the picture may be blurred, and subject to so many necessary deductions as to be almost, if not entirely, valueless?

It is confessed the peril seems serious. But we need not be afraid that it will be forgotten. The modern mind will take care that it is not passed by, and will in all likelihood make far too much of it. The "contemporary equation" is sure to be fully discounted. The imperious demands of the "historic sense" will be met to the full.

Indeed, the documents themselves compel this rigid scrutiny of the first generation of the disciples of Christ ; for they tell us of their dulness of mind, of their "slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets had told them," of their misunderstanding of His meaning, of their hesitations and doubts, contradictions and failures.

Nor can we forget that we have not one portrait of Christ, but several ; not only those of the four evangelists, but that of the Acts, that of Paul, that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that of

the Apocalypse. And we cannot look at them without thinking of the differences amongst the artists. We cannot read Mark, and fail to see the vivid colouring he gives to his picture ; or Paul, and forget that he did not know Jesus after the flesh ; or the Hebrews, and not consider that it was written to sustain the faith of the imperilled professors of a new religion ; or John, and ignore the activity of his mind in recording the words of Jesus ; or the variety of representations of the original in his Gospel and in the Book of Revelation. The skill, mood, and character of the artist and the condition of his materials must all be kept in mind in using any narrative as a historic source in the strict sense.

IV.

Begin, then, with Peter. Look at the glimpses of Jesus given by him in his early sermons, in the Gospel of Mark, and in the first of the two letters bearing his name.

See how, in the sermons, by a few swift strokes of his impetuous mind he makes the Christ stand before us. There is no blurring of the picture. The outlines are firmly drawn. The colours are harmonious. The features are unforgettable in

their strength and beauty. It is the living image of Jesus as Peter saw Him in his own home at Capernaum, where the Master often stayed ; as he followed Him through the stirring days of His healing ministry, along the shores of the Galilean lake, going about everywhere doing acts of kindness, and curing all who were crushed by the power of the devil. It is the "Strong Son of God, immortal love," we see using His exhaustless energies to destroy the miseries of men, and to bring peace and joy to all.

Again, strength used in redeeming and healing men dominates the Christ of the Gospels as of the Sermon in the house of Cornelius. There is no difference. The opening paragraphs of the account of Christ given to Mark by Peter show the clear and decisive character of the impression made on this man's mind by Christ. Jesus is the Mighty One. This is the keynote to His history. This accounts for His wonderful influence over men, over disease, and over death. He is strong in intellect, and vanquishes His captious critics at a stroke ; in heart, and wins devoted followers by a look and a word ; in holiness, and lays bare the hypocrisies and falsehoods of the current religion

with piercing skill. He is strong in self-mastery, in choice of work, in courage, in speech, in character; He is the strongest of the strong, and can be none other than *the* Christ.[2] That is Peter's Christ.

But that is not all. We have not yet exhausted the witness of Peter. He has much more to tell. The Strong Son of God is put to death. Jesus dies and is buried, and for Peter the world is a blank; he is in utter despair; gives up every hope of a better day, and goes back to his fishing. But another day dawns, and the old impressions are renewed and strengthened. Somehow or other Jesus resumes His friendly fellowship, calls His dejected follower back to his vocation, and fills his soul once more with the sense of his unsubduable strength, just in the same manner as He had done in the house at Capernaum or on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yea, He rules him more completely now than He did before. "Though we see Him not, yet believing,

[2] Mark viii., 29. If we accept this, and not Matthew's setting, as the original form of Peter's confession, and admit that its range is not so wide, yet we cannot question the strength of conviction and the fulness of emotion with which it must have been charged.

we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Jesus of Nazareth is still God's Messenger. He is also Lord of all. He has the authority of power to get the right and the good thing done. He is the Mediator of the streams of energy that fill the thousands of new converts at Jerusalem, the Healer and Restorer of the man lame from his birth, the origin of the religious revival in Samaria, and the Saviour of Cornelius and his household. Peter has lost the "external" Christ, but the internal Christ within him is the same as ever in His might and joy, in His teaching and grace.[3]

V.

Now note (1) the testimony throughout is from the same man. It is Peter who speaks in the Epistle,[4] who preaches the sermon and dictates the Gospel.

[3] "His mind is saturated with the words of Christ, and instinctively turns to the substance and words of the teaching of Jesus." Dr. Chase, in "Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible." Vol. iii. p. 788. Article on First Peter, said by Dr. Moffatt to be the finest piece of work on the Epistle in any language.

[4] Dr. Chase says: "The only natural interpretation of the facts, the early and wide influence of the Epistle on the one hand; on the other, the consistent and unwavering attribution

Presuppositions must not be allowed in the catechising of this witness. He must be heard as he speaks of Christ when he is writing to the Northern Asiatic communities, as well as when he tells his reminiscences of the ceaseless beneficence of Christ in the villages and towns of northern Palestine. The documents do not permit us to refuse the declaration of trust in, and gratitude for, the preciousness of Christ in the letter written during the "shock and agitation consequent upon the outbreak of Nero's malevolence",[5] and accept the rapturous exclamation of the awe-struck soul, "Thou art the Christ." We must take both or neither.

The historical student is not at liberty to go to our sources for the "most vivid intuition born of personal experience of the significance of the Christ

of it to St. Peter on the part of all writers, from Irenæus' time onward, is that from the first it was regarded as the work of the Apostle." Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," vol. iii. But see a very complete statement by Dr. Moffatt in "The Historical New Testament," pp. 242-251.

[5] The date given for the Epistle is the seventh decade, say 64. "It is the nearest written evidence we have for the activities of the primitive Apostles." Dr. Moffatt, "The Historical New Testament," p. 250.

of Palestine" ;[6] and then throw the sources aside where they disclose to us the same Christ as the Leader and Ruler of the primitive Christian community. Mark's Gospel and Peter's First Epistle must be taken or rejected together. They stand on the same historical foundations. The representations they contain of Jesus have the value of portraits drawn and signed by the same hand. In both we see Jesus "rejected of men," the strong and patient sufferer for the right, the kindly Shepherd and Protector of souls ; put to death in the flesh, but indescribably vital and vitalising in the realm of the Spirit, and therefore made "the corner stone" of the new human habitation of God, the brotherhood of the holy.

(2) But is Peter typical of the men whose impressions of Christ we are investigating ? May we take him as a pattern of the whole ?

Assuredly we may, but not without noting important differences. The Apostle John, for example, was Peter's special companion, and was associated with him, not only in his general, but in his more signal, experiences of Christ ; such as the scene in the home of Jairus, the story of

[6] Dr. Fairbairn's "Christ in Modern Theology," p. 330.

the Transfiguration heights, and the sorrows of Gethsemane ; yet being cast in an entirely different mould, he carries away with him the great interpreting ideas of Christ, and uses them with unequalled skill in his study of God, and of life, and of the world, as also in his work for the quickening and expansion of the Churches. Jesus first stirs John's intellect, and then his heart. He is regenerated both in mind and in affection ; and the primary impression of Him he carries to the end of the century is, that He is "the Way to the Father," "the Truth about God," and the Mediator of life ; He is the Eternal Life itself, seen, touched, and experienced, and therefore the Eternal Light ; and all because He is the Eternal Love.

This Gospel, therefore, is more didactic than historical. It is historical ; but the history is given for the sake of the teaching, and not for its own sake. He does fill in some of the gaps in the ministry of Jesus ; and he never reports a discourse without describing the situation out of which it rises, and the immediate purpose it is meant to serve. But it is obvious that his aim is to supply the interpretation of God and life

which Jesus gives by His "signs and words;" and that the impression Jesus has made upon his life is, that He is, first of all, the revealer of the hidden God; also the manifestation of the Eternal Life in time, to be handled, and tasted, and lived, and the irrefragable proof of the Eternal Love in a "world" dominated by hate. The emphasis in his experience is not on the strength of the "Strong Son of God," but on the "immortal love" and all it means and brings to men.

(3) Now, gathering these sources together, and subjecting them to the same treatment, what is the resulting portrait of the Founder of the Christian Religion?

Taking the impressions made on the mind and heart of Peter and John, of Paul and the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, of the author of the Revelation, and of the people who appear as members of the Christian communities in the Book of the Acts of the Churches, and adding all together we arrive at the following conclusions:—

(a) First, the unique and universally admitted fact emerges, that the Christianity of the early years consisted, in its essence, of trust in, and practical devotion to, Christ Jesus. The supreme

question was, "What does *He* wish us to do?" "What is *His* will?" The great affirmation was, "To me to live is Christ"; *He* is all and in all. His favour is life, and His lovingkindness is better than life. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The aged Polycarp says: "Eighty and six years have I been His servant, and He never did me an injury; how then can I blaspheme my King who is my Saviour?"

The one infallible authority stood declared in the words, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren"; and the counsel of Mary the mother of Jesus was the accepted law of the Christian Society, "Whatsoever He saith to you, do it." All the disciples of Christ, John and Paul included, were not so firmly held and deeply absorbed in His ideas as they were devoted to His Person. They were not seeking a philosophy, but a life; not a scheme of thought, but of salvation; they were not asking, what is justice, what is holiness, what is beauty, after the fashion of Socrates; but what is Christ? How did He live? They were assured that if they found Him they would surely find and enjoy as their own, justice and holiness and beauty.[7]

[7] See Note Page 130.

Now, it is not theology that puts the Person of Christ in that high and commanding place ; it is experience as history has recorded it.

(b) Putting the impressions made by Jesus on the Twelve in Palestine by the side of those reported as continuing to be made on the Christian host by their experience of the gospel all over the Roman Empire, it appears that Jesus still lived, and taught, and worked ; that as the writer of the *Acts* most suggestively says, "All that Jesus *began* to do and to teach, He *continued* to do and teach." There was a fundamental identity between Jesus of the Gospels, of the Epistles, and of the Acts, of the Hebrews and of the Apocalypse. One difference is patent, that of physical visibility and tangibility ; a second is not less obvious, that of spiritual development and wonderfully increased power ; but in other respects the identity, if not complete, is far-reaching to a very striking degree.

Now I am not at present concerned with the theology, that is, the interpretation of these facts ; but only with the facts themselves, the valid contents of our historical sources strictly treated as such. See, then, the result !

Does the earliest Gospel show Jesus, not as a pale, anæmic figure, but as the strong young man, strong in every way in which strength can wisely and beneficently manifest itself? So Paul puts into a phrase the new consciousness created in him and in his fellow-Christians by Jesus Christ, in the language, "I am equal to all things through Christ who strengthens me." Is it the mark of Paul that he is ready for anything, that, like Napoleon, he always knows what to do next? The same may be said of the Christian Churches of his day. Does Harnack tell us, "There is no historical fact more certain than that the Apostle Paul was not the first to emphasize so prominently the significance of Christ's death and resurrection, but that in recognizing their meaning he stood on exactly the same ground as the primitive Christian community?" Still more unquestionable is it, that Paul in the assertion of his conscious strength through Christ is the primitive Christian community incarnate; for nothing more distinctly marks out those early assemblies than their insuppressible power, their advancing strength. They act as those who are conscious of exhaustless resources. They do not regard

Christ as one who has inspired a society and gone outside of it to see it act. He is in it, its life and energy. His influence persists. The impulse He transmitted is still at work ; the assemblage of forces He had stored was operative ; but more than that, they tell us that they felt that He was Himself illumining their minds, guiding their judgment, rebuking their sins, and stimulating their service.

Does Jesus begin His work by announcing the rule of God, and gather to Himself men as disciples to be taught His will ? So the Book of the Acts shows the kingdom coming, coming in power and in great glory ; advancing from city to city, and enrolling thousands of men and women of different tribes and peoples under the sway of the new King.

Is the Jesus of the Gospels "the greatest optimist the world ever saw," according to Dr. Edward Caird ? So His followers, though cast down, are not destroyed ; though defeated, are always buoyantly hopeful and expectant.

Is Jesus the incarnation of self-sacrificing love, of sweet forgivingness, even for His murderers ? So nothing is more arresting or impressive than the

loving brotherhood He has created and into which He has breathed His own spirit. Does Christ win Peter back to service after his bold rebuke and sustain him in his new endeavours? So it is His voice that cheers Paul on the wrecked ship, and His presence that emboldens him in the court of the persecuting Nero. In short, if we take the portrait of the personal life pourtrayed in the Gospels and the definite picture given by the records in the other parts of the New Testament, we are brought into the presence of a coherent and consistent whole of purity and strength, wisdom and grace, surpassed by no other figure in history.

(c) But another fact deserves to be stated. It is clear that these Christians speak and act as though they have come into contact with the final truth, with the ultimate reality. They believed Christ created the new Religion; that He drew them together in fraternal fellowship; that He was the author and finisher of the Christian faith. They have had their doubts and misgivings. Other voices have called. Other masters have claimed their allegiance. But when they are challenged to leave the new Teacher, they

exclaim, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They can find no other; accordingly they live as men who have re-constructed their world with Christ Jesus as its working centre, its rightful ruler, and its true goal.

VI.

The picture of Jesus, left on the mind of His age, would fall far short of our sources, if we did not paint the back-ground supplied from the conceptions of His adversaries on the one hand, and from the common people on the other.

His opponents were many, eager, unscrupulous, and fierce. He had the reformer's faculty of creating hostility. His feeling for reality urged Him against all hypocrisy and double dealing, profanity and vulgarity of soul, contempt of man, and irreverence for God. Scarcely had He set foot in Jerusalem as a teacher and preacher before He challenged the practice of converting the outer courts of the Temple, the only portions of that edifice which expressed the broader aspects of the Jewish religion, into a market for huckstering traffickers; a deed which struck the imagination of His critics and filled them with awe of His daring zeal for purity and God.

The professional teachers and preachers of the synagogues saw in Him an irreligious meddler who ought to be put down ; who was Himself a layman, and had no respect for professional priests ; a man who was reprehensively bold in His treatment of the oracles of God, corrected their sacred books, criticised their false interpretations, contemned their formal use of their institutions, the Sabbath, fasting, and the like, blasphemously, as they thought, claimed to forgive sins, exposed their love for hair-splitting debates and trivial casuistries, and terrified them by His sheer intellectual strength into silence. They were narrow in their sympathies ; He was broad. They were vain of their country ; He was in love with all men. They fed their pride on their religion ; He used religion to make life less difficult for, and more helpful to, the weary and lost. They were in league with the priestly and aristocratic class who ultimately put Him to death. He was the acknowledged friend of men boycotted by respectable society, and of women cast out and trodden under foot. They were hard and unsympathetic towards the poor, diseased, and needy ; He bore their infirmities and carried their

sorrows. None of them saw in this outsider the weak, pale, emaciated figure of mediæval art; to them He was the embodiment of wild strength; of strength that would not be curbed, and could not be accounted for on ordinary human lines; and therefore, whilst they were unable to deny or question its reality and greatness, they sought to explain it by charging Him with an alliance with the devil.

Far different was the impression made by this fearless soul on the band of followers and friends He gathered around Him in the villages and hamlets of Galilee, and the streets and slums of Jerusalem. Some of them, stirred by His appeals to their consciences, saw in Him the prophet of the Jordan given back from death to complete his reforming work; others, struck with His audacity in challenging the leaders of the Hebrew Church, thought of Him as the prophet who dared to defy King Ahab and his wife Jezebel; and others, again, were reminded by His tender sympathy and unconquerable patience, of Jeremiah; but all detected something of the Prophet of the Highest.

"The aliens" from the commonwealth, the

boycotted sinners, the worldlings who did not attend the churches' worship, the men and women who had lost hope, and lost all but God, felt the charm of His sympathy and the spell of His frank humanity, and were won into the circle of admirers and lovers. They were drawn to Him like flowers to the sun. They heard Him gladly as listening to a real friend; they followed Him from spot to spot as He went upon His journeys, and in the fervour of their affection would have done anything to lift Him to the highest pinnacle of greatness as they in their untutored love conceived it. So each man said in his heart, as he thought of Him:

> "It shall be
> A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
> Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
> Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
> See the Christ stand!"

And some souls that had long been waiting for the consolation of Israel, were ready to add:

> "That one face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose.
> Becomes our universe that feels and knows."

VII.

Another branch of this subject must not be overlooked. The Founder of a Religion power-

fully affects the age in which he appears, not only through the disciples he wins and the opportunities he creates, but also through the influence which streams from his personality upon the whole life of the time. He penetrates its thought, pervades its emotions, and rules its spiritual life. He is as leaven hidden in the meal of the humanity around him; or as one who "scatters the seed of truth over the ground; he spends days and nights, now awake, now asleep, while the seed sprouts and grows tall, he knows not how. Of itself the land produces the crop—first the blade, then the ear; afterwards the perfect grain is seen in the ear." [8]

This fact finds expression in the earliest Christian hymn,[9] a hymn which describes Christ as the discoverer of the secret of godlike living, and exults in the fact that the mystery hidden for ages was disclosed in human form, proclaimed amongst the nations, believed on in the world, and vindicated by its spiritual results. Jesus was not only the inspiration of the courage and endurance of the apostles; He was also the creator of the new spiritual "atmosphere," a new moral world. As

[8] Matthew xiii. 33. Mark iv. 26-29. [9] i. Timothy, iii. 16.

Wernle says: "He shattered the institution of the Jewish Church. . . . He imparted new values to things; He scattered new thoughts broadcast in the world, and His Person gave these new values and new thoughts that victorious power which transformed the world."[10] He "came that men might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and therefore He created a new environment for the life that He gave.

It is this which explains the unprecedented successes of the first missionaries of the Cross, the gradual escape of the Religion of Palestine from the limitations of Judaism, the widening sway of evangelical enthusiasm in the Churches, and the triumphs of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

VIII.

But again the question arises, if we embrace the impressions made by Jesus in the minds of His immediate circle of disciples, and on His age, why stop there? You cannot arrest, it is said with truth, the evolutionary process at any point you please. If you admit "development" at all, you must admit

[10] "The Beginnings of Christianity," by Paul Wernle. Vol. i. pp. 37—118. Williams & Norgate, 1905.

it wholly, in the second century as well as the first, and in the twentieth not less than the second. If John is admitted into court as a witness at the very end of the era of primitive Christianity, by what authority do you refuse to hear Pope Leo XIII. at the close of the nineteenth century of the Christian era? If the first witnesses and interpreters of Jesus may be heard, why not the last? surely you cannot accept the principle of evolution in the case of Peter and James and the Twelve, and refuse it in the case of their successors.

Dr. Mason says, "The impression which Jesus made upon contemporaries is not an adequate standard to judge Him by. Jesus Christ cannot be appreciated until we have taken fully into account the effects which He has produced upon the history of mankind, and is still producing and to produce. In the language of St. Paul, 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' is not yet reached. Any attempt even now to estimate what Christ is, must be provisional; at best, it can only hold good for the time being. No portrait can depict its subject except at that

stage of his development at which it was taken ; and Christ is still growing." [11]

That is true ; and the theory of evolution on which it is based, is frankly accepted and cordially welcomed. It lies on the face of our Gospels. It is implicit in revelation. In the strict sense Christianity is itself, in part, a development from a pre-existing religion ; and in its long history it has been, and it is an ordered evolution. The teaching of the *Colossians* is an advance on that given in the letter to the *Thessalonians*, and the light is clearer in the *Hebrews* and the *Acts* than in *Matthew* and *Mark*. Harnack says, "a complete answer to the question, "What is Christianity ?" is impossible so long as we are restricted to Jesus Christ's teaching alone. We must include the first generation of His disciples as well—those who ate and drank with Him—and we must listen to what they tell us of the effect which He had upon their lives."

But even this does not exhaust our materials. If Christianity is an example of a great power, valid not for one particular epoch alone ; if in and

[11] "Cambridge Theological Essays." Essay xi., by Dr. A. J. Mason, p. 423.

through it, not once only, but again and again, great forces have been disengaged, we must include all the later products of its spirit. It is not a question of a "doctrine" being handed down by uniform repetition or arbitrarily distorted; it is a question of a *life*, again and again kindled afresh, and now burning with a flame of its own. We may also add that Christ Himself and the apostles were convinced that the religion they were planting, would, in the ages to come, have a greater destiny and a deeper meaning than it possessed at the time of its institution; they trusted to its spirit leading from one point of light to another, and developing higher forces. Just as we cannot obtain a complete knowledge of a tree without regarding not only its root and its stem, but also its bark, its branches, and the way in which it blooms, so we cannot form any right estimate of the Christian Religion unless we take our stand upon a comprehensive induction that shall cover all the facts of its history.[12]

The Abbé Loisy endorses this, but contends that

[12] Harnack's "Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries." Vol. i. pp. 40-48; and "What is Christianity?" pp. 10, 11.

Harnack fails in thoroughness. Harnack does not embrace enough ; and indeed, refuses to accept everything which happens to find a place in, or is in touch with, the "movement originated by Jesus." "Why," cries the Abbé, "not find the essence of Christianity in the fulness and totality of its life, which shows movement and variety just because it is life, but inasmuch as it is life proceeding from an obviously powerful principle, has grown in accordance with a law which affirms at every step the initial force that may be called its physical essence revealed in all its manifestations ? Why should the essence of a tree be held to be but a particle of the seed from which it has sprung, and why should it not be recognized as truly and fully in the complete tree as in the germ" ?[13]

Clearly we are face to face with the same problem as that which confronted us when we were speaking of the ideas of Jesus. Then we found that it is necessary in the interests of truth, historic truth, that we should discriminate

[13] "The Gospel and the Church," by Alfred Loisy. Isbister and Co., 1903. p. 16. In the third French Edition. Introduction : p. xxvi.

amongst our facts ; and not suffer ourselves to be ensnared by false filiations of ideas. So again we must remember that all is not a "development" of Christianity which passes under that name. Cardinal Newman says, "This one thing at least is certain ; whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, whatever it says and unsays, at least, the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this."[14] Very well, then, we may in the Cardinal's name tell the Abbé that the Christianity of history may not be "Romanism."

There is such a fact as degeneration. The dog-rose is a case of reversion, and not of evolution. Dr. E. Ray Lankester says, "Any new set of conditions occurring to an animal which renders its food and safety very easily attained, seem to lead as a rule to degeneration."

May it not be that such conditions arrived in the history of Christianity, and that our duty is to enquire into them ; and not to blindly accept, say, the forged decretals on which the Papacy rests,

[14] "Development of Christian Doctrine," by J. H. Newman, p. 7.

even though they are part of a general "movement" of Christianity, because we admit the "developed" Christianity of the New Testament amongst the *data* by which we determine what the essence of the Christian Religion is, and what it is not.

It is a perfectly safe canon to follow in this enquiry, that whatever in the subsequent history of a religion contradicts its primary impulse, opposes its originating ideas and affronts the personality of the Founder, is not development, but degeneration. This applies to all religions. It is scientific. The student of Comparative Religion discriminates between (1) the original Religion, (2) the legitimate development of its contents, (3) the additions made to it, (4) the sources from whence those additions come, and (5) the influence of those additions upon the evolution of the original nucleus. This canon must be worked faithfully, if we are to find the essence of the Christian Religion.

Essential Christianity, according to the Abbé, is not the Person and teaching and work of Jesus in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles; it is the whole twenty centuries' development of Ecclesiasticism,

Theology and Religion as embodied in the Church of Rome at this moment; all the dogmas and superstitions, the institutions and disciplines, ceremonies and ideas, devotions and orders of Romanism. Whatever is in Rome is Christianity. The dogmas may be incomprehensible and in flat contradiction to the ideas of Jesus Christ. The superstitions may be dark and blinding as any in heathendom; the institutions may be as anti-human and tyrannical as the Inquisition; the disciplines may be wasteful of human life and power; but they are, on this theory, of the essence of Christianity. They may include the denial of liberty of worship, liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, and liberty of speech, as declared in the syllabus of the infallible Pope Pius IX.; or even the strange contents of the oath in which the Roman convert declares that he "detests and abjures every error, heresy and sect opposed to the said Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church;" still, they are "of the faith"; they take their place of right in essential Christianity.

Of all this I unhesitatingly say, after the pattern of Newman, "this one thing at least is certain, the Christianity of the New Testament is not this

Romanism." If ever there were a safe, an undeniable truth, it is this. Roman Catholicism is the negation of Christianity. It dismisses the Christ of the New Testament and puts the Pope in His place. It openly contradicts the ideas of Jesus Christ and of His Apostles. It gives us another Jesus, and a different gospel.

(2) But if we may not appeal to the totality of the movement initiated by Jesus, may we accept as truly Christian the faith and observance of the Christian Churches up to the end of the sixth century ?

This is the plea of Dr. Wace and Dr. Sanday, and the evangelical party of the Anglican Church. Grieved at the advancing Romanism of their Church, they led a pilgrimage to Lambeth Palace, and presented a request, backed by thousands of signatures, for restricting the "Appeal to the first Six Centuries" on all matters of doctrine and practice.[15] The principle of the appeal is that nothing can be accepted as truly catholic which cannot claim the general assent and observance of the

[15] See the Second of the "Seven Memorials" presented to the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, given in the Report presented to Parliament in 1906, p. 5.

Christian Church before the Sixth Century. In 1905 the Lower House of Canterbury Convocation resolved "that the appeal to antiquity may rightly be interpreted as an appeal to the general practice of the Catholic Church in the First Six Centuries, and that amid present controversies a fuller recognition of this principle is much to be desired."

Such a limitation of the area of enquiry is a gain in many ways. It takes us nearer to the original founts of Christianity, and every step we take in that direction is an advantage. It shuts out the dogmas of the infallibility of the Pope, and of the Immaculate Conception; the former doctrine only being made a part of essential Roman Catholic Christianity in 1870, and the latter as late as 1854. But it includes the dogma which interprets the death of Christ as a debt paid to the devil; the condemnation of married life, as compared with that of the celibate; the universal depreciation of woman, the worship of saints and belief in their intercessory power; the veneration of relics and belief in their miraculous value; the use of the sign of the Cross, and the veneration of it; the special honour of Mary as the mother of God; altars, masses, holy water, sacred vestments, and

the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.[16]

It is obvious, therefore, that we are not lifted out of our difficulties. As Dr. Sanday said at the time of the deputation, there is a true, and there is a false "development," or I may say there is a genuine evolution of the essential Religion of Jesus ; and there is a body of parasitical growths from the alien germs of imperial Rome, of Greek speculation, of worldly greed and so on, and therefore the one thing needful is discrimination ; and discrimination based upon the sound principle of reasoning I have enunciated above. We do not institute a six century or a three century criterion for testing the religion of Mahomet. We go to the Koran ; we study the Prophet himself and his disciples and his age. We must observe the same rule with the Christian Religion.

This six-century criterion will not therefore finally help us. By it we are led away from the essence of Christianity. The decisive and final test is not in six or sixteen centuries ; it is not a time test at all ; it is Jesus Himself, the glad tidings He preached, the life He lived, the work

[16] Rev. John Freeland, *Dublin Review*, April, 1905.

of redemption He achieved. The essence of Christianity is timeless. It is the Eternal Religion.

Moreover, Dr. Middleton proved that the fourth century writers were most apt in forgery of documents, in falsifying history, and in carrying out pious frauds with sincere purpose. They were not careful about their language. They opened the doors to false reasonings and debasing practices. Nor are the great Councils safer guides. Hilary says of them, "We determine creeds by the year or by the month ; we change our determinations, we prohibit changes, we anathematise our prohibitions." One Council figures in history as the Robber synod, and at it, a Bishop was trampled to death ; another, that of Arles, was guilty of condemning Athanasius for doctrines which afterwards were declared by other Councils to be the essence of the Christian Gospel.

We are thus driven back upon the historical Christ of the New Testament. To Him we must go (1) to deliver us from the destructive tyranny of the theories subsequent generations have originated concerning His Religion. We must know Him historically. We must bring our problems to His wisdom, our troubles to His

sympathy, and correct our ideas and actions, religious, social, and political, by the principles He exhibits and the laws He lays down in the life He lives. It is there we get to objective fact. There we find rock, and cease to hang in "subjective mid-air." "It is the objective reality of the personal life of Jesus and in His power to make us feel God working upon us,"[17] that will give us the joy and the strength of an assured conviction. (2) We must go to this criterion because we have in the Gospels and Epistles the pure idea of Christianity, with the minimum alloy. Theologies which vary with the varying conditions of men, and require a new language at least every thirty years, are not there. Dogma is a creation and not a basis of theology; and theology is the product of many factors, and above all, of the spirit of the time; but it is not dogma which is in our Scriptures, it is the real basis of theology. The creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon are the matured fruits of speculative thinking, the valuable results of the application of the mind of man to the interpretation of the

[17] Dr. W. Herrmann's "The Communion of the Christian with God," p. 85.

profoundest facts ; and are of service as records of such thinking, and as aids and beacons to men who must construct a philosophy of religion ; but they are of no real service in determining what Christianity is and what it is not in its original nature and contents. In like manner, the story of ecclesiastical organization is profitable for instruction in church-building, for reproof of professionalism, and for warning against the materialising of religion ; but there is scarcely any of it in our documents, and the Religion of Christ is in spirit and in form a layman's religion.

We come, then, to the same conclusion as that we reached when speaking of the Ideas of Jesus ; we can accept nothing as essentially Christian which is at variance with the spirit, the character, the teaching and work of the Christ as we see Him in the impression He made upon His contemporaries and upon the age in which He lived, and the one immediately following. Our appeal is to the Christ of the Great Forty Years.[18]

[18] Cf. "The Christian Certainties," by John Clifford. Isbister & Co., 1893, p. 107, et seq.

NOTE 7. PAGE 106.

THE PERSON OF JESUS IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

"But the relation of Jesus Christ to Christianity differs entirely from that of all other founders towards the religions or philosophies which bear their names. Platonism, for example, may be defined as a method of philosophic thought derived from Plato; Mohammedanism as the belief in a revelation vouchsafed to Mohammed; Buddhism, as the following of principles enunciated by Buddha. But Christianity is in essence adherence to the Person of Jesus Christ. A Christian naturally asks not so much, 'What did our Lord command?' as 'What would He wish me to do?' He regards Christ as an ever-present Master." "Cambridge Theological Essays." Edited by Dr. H. B. Swete. Essay by Rev. F. J. Foakes-Jackson, B.D. p. 474. Cf. Bishop Gore's "Bampton Lectures," p. 9. "The Personal relation to Himself is from first to last the essence of the religion which He inaugurated." Dr. Creighton said: "Christianity is not a system of doctrine, not an organisation, not even a Church first and foremost. It means a Person—Jesus." Cf. also Dr. Fairbairn's "Philosophy of Religion," pp. 532-3. Mark Rutherford, "The Deliverance," p. 167. "The secret of the Christian Religion is that it is based upon a Person, and the whole drift of Paul's Epistles is specially this—to turn Christ into a second conscience."

LECTURE IV.

The Sources: III.—The Consciousness of Jesus.

The sources to which we go for our information concerning the Founder of the Christian Religion contain three strata, fairly distinct from each other.

In the first deposit, which is probably the earliest, we find the *Logia* of Jesus, brief, cogent, direct, and often pictorial, fashioned, as to their form, on the pattern of the sayings of the Rabbis, but filled with a new and renewing spirit. You see them, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount, collected around the theme of "Righteousness," and constituting a practical guide for the young disciples of the new life.

The next stratum supplies the impressions—"casts," one might call them—made by the unique and powerful personality of Jesus, on the minds of His devoted pupils on the one hand,

and of His persistent opponents on the other.

The third, and the most valuable of the three, preserves the autobiographic utterances of Christ; the clear transcripts of His consciousness; what may be called the interpretation of Himself to Himself, given sometimes to the listening people, oftener and most frequently imparted to His disciples.

I.

It is to this third stratum we come now; and although the task is one of great difficulty, yet we come with the well-grounded conviction, derived from the testimony of the students of the Science of Comparative Religion, that we shall be brought face to face with the most authoritative disclosures of the character and content of the Christian Religion, because we shall be carried into the inmost recesses of the personality of its Creator.

Christ is Christianity. The phrase is as familiar as it is axiomatic; and the consciousness of Christ is at once the source and the measure, the fountain-head and the criterion of His Religion. If we know *that*, we shall know it, and Him; the Religion and its Originator.

Christ's ideas of God, of the universe, of the duty

of man, of the human race, of time and eternity, are factors of immense importance, and go far to help us to understand Him and His Religion. His career from its beginning to its earthly close, with its long discipline, and brief public service, with its crowded activities, and its tragic end, with its high aims and exhaustless influences, aids us still more ; but we are never so sure of our conclusions as to the nature of the Christian Religion as when we see Jesus Himself, the First Christian, in the soul of Him, and catch the tones of His voice as He explains His own deepest experiences, describes His vocation, sets out the place and meaning of His sufferings and death, or unfolds His mysterious and manifold relations to God, to man, and to the universe.

Even the Platonic philosophy gains in interest, if not in clearness, from our knowledge of Plato ; but it is admitted that we may see into the depths of that system of thought, even though we are ignorant of him. Buddha's life-story is rich in charm ; but the principles of that great religion may be fully appreciated though we know nothing of Buddha. The career of the Arabian prophet throbs with interesting episodes and illuminating

incidents; but the religion that bears his name is essentially a book-religion, and his chief service, according to Wellhausen, is that "the personality of the prophet gave an altogether new impulse to the (monotheistic) movement already in existence. That was all."[1] And therefore we may know his religion without knowing him.

But with the Christian Religion it is different. Jesus Himself is its source, and is so integral a part of it, that we cannot possibly know it, in its essence and permanent qualities, apart from His Personality. The historical "sense" demands, therefore, that every effort be made to penetrate to His inmost life, to place ourselves at the right angle of vision, so that we may secure a full and accurate acquaintance with *the mind of Christ*. On no other condition can we get at the value of Jesus as a fact, and as a factor in the history of humanity.

(1) Moreover, our sources, as well as the historic method of enquiry, demand this investigation; for according to the documents, the one claim Jesus is always urging to the front, is for that act of "faith" which is the identification of

[1] Encyclopædia Brit. Art. Mohammed.

the soul with Himself. He claims that His Religion consists in "coming to Him," in "following Him," in "union with Him," in purpose, and love, and will. He calls men definitely to Himself; that is the distinctive thing about Him. It is the place He claims in Mark, and in Luke, and in Matthew, as well as in John. It is the place He takes, with the inevitableness of destiny, in the Acts, in the letters of Paul, in the Hebrews, and in the Book of Revelation. Other teachers, in the measure of their greatness, efface themselves. He insists upon Himself. "The Perfect, that is the Buddha, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the order is dependent upon him." Jesus compels men to "think of Himself" as the One who leads; they must live for "His sake," find their principles, their ideas, their way, and their goal in Himself. On the face of our writings (whatever it may mean, and of that I say nothing now) that claim alone differentiates Jesus from other Masters of the spiritual life and makes it incumbent upon us, if we would know and possess His Religion, not to be content with His *words*, or with the knowledge of His *deeds*, or of the exterior features of His life,

but to press forward and enter into the holy place and gaze on the Shekinah glory. Keim, who is not a critic with any bias in favour of any theology, sums up the situation when he tells us that "the Religion of Christ goes mysteriously back to His person, and this fundamental fact enables us to understand the religion which sprang from it."[2]

(2) Moreover, it is clear that the authors of our documents were under the sway of influences which compelled them to give the foremost emphasis to the personality of Jesus, and not to His words or His deeds, or only to these as the mirrors of Himself. The early Christian communities were moved by an irresistible impulse to preserve the human portraiture of their Lord; and the evangelists, like Mark or Luke, who took their picture from them, and not from personal observation, inevitably followed the same course. John came later to add touches of his own to the portrait which they had left only dimly sketched. Those societies could not forget Him; since some of their members had seen Him in the flesh, and others had heard of Him from hearts that flamed

[2] See Note Pages 176, 177.

with enthusiasm at the recollection of all that He was and did.

Apparently they were not solicitous to report with faultless precision the exact words of Jesus. If we compare the earliest account of the Lord's Supper given in the First Corinthians (xi. 23), by Paul, and the record given by Mark in his Gospel, we see, at once, that although both may be derived from the current speech of the societies, yet there is no care to secure verbal sameness. They were content with the idea, as though they had thoroughly learnt the Master's teaching that "the letter kills"; it is the spirit that gives life.[3]

But all the critics agree that these men were bent on telling about *Him*, and that they write like those who are in the presence of an intellectual and spiritual phenomenon of unprecedented significance, a personality of surprising range, of mysterious comprehensiveness, and of undeniable originality. Therefore they have given us, with the naturalness and simplicity of genius, the workings of His mind, the movements of His heart and will, the various constituents of His personality. He is a man among men; of the

[3] Weinel's "St. Paul: The Man and his Work." p. 318.

human most human, and always accessible to the human ; a man of visions and dreams, and yet of masterful practicality ; with moments of flaming indignation and hours of ecstasy, yet so sunny that children run to Him, and despairing women trust Him ; compassionate and forgiving to such a degree that the fallen rise at His touch, and yet so pure that the guilty quail before Him. His magnanimity and sweet reasonableness are mated with majesty of expression and dignity of bearing. Great are His delights in meeting with simple human folk ; greater still His joy in His consecrated communion with His heavenly Father. He is intellectually agile, and He burns with holy fire against duplicity and wrong. He is serene in spirit, but with a passion for truth and reality revealed in invincible dislike of artifice, formalism, and all the conventional hypocrisies of the Church. He is infinite in patience, but flames out in wrathful denunciation of frauds wrought in the name of religion. Great as is His mission, and absorbing as it was to Him, yet it does not narrow His sympathies or close His vision to the concrete facts of life, the glories of the skies, or the many-coloured beauties of nature. Paul says, " One

thing I do," and the art and the glories of Rome are ignored. Luther, the mighty man of the Reformation, failed to see the value of an epistle in the New Testament which did not add strength to the setting of his favourite doctrine. Bernard sees the beauty of Jesus, but not of His world. Was ever a mind so broad in its sweep, and were eyes ever so open to all the loveliness and wonder of life as Christ's ? The life and scenery of the Holy Land might be painted from His speech, for of all teachers He was one of the most observant. He saw all things, and into all things. Pictures crowd these Gospel galleries from His hand, both of quiet nature and of our simple life ; pictures of candles burning, and of the mending of clothes, of women grinding corn and women baking, of money-lenders and of the officers of the law, of feasts and weddings, of farmers and seed-sowing, of fruit-culture and the care of sheep, as well as of the lilies and the grass of the field, of the mountain and the plain ; and yet with this eye for the richly-coloured vesture of things, He strikes to the deepest springs of thought and action, and brings to light the hidden things of dishonesty and impurity. He is as

intense an individualist as though man were alone; but His social sympathies are so wide, that men seeking to reconstruct society always claim to be following Him. He was Himself as happy and as light-hearted as a child, but who ever knew the agonies of the soul as He? Humour and satire and irony have their place in His speech as well as words that soothe and heal. He works with tireless devotion, and yet has peace and rest to spare for the weary and heavy-laden. His love is for mankind, not for a race or a sect, and yet He is cheered by the fellowship of a few kindred souls. He is a mighty vitalising force, and in His service of men He gives out His life, His soul, His all. "What a paragon" is this man! "How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel! In apprehension and in personality how like a god!" To what measureless heights He rises! To what lowly worlds of sin and misery His love carries Him! I am not surprised that Charles Lamb should say with reverent awe, "If Shakespeare was to come into this room we should all rise up to meet him; but if that Person was to come into it we should

all fall down and try to kiss the hem of His garment."

II.

But it is not enough to trace these general features in the evangelical portrait of Jesus ; we must do what we can to fix definitely in our minds, from our historical sources, the central and distinctive constituents of His consciousness, for these are the factors that enter into and give form to His Religion.

I will mention six.

(1) First : Jesus knows Himself as human. He is one of ourselves. He is man. He is fully human. He is not an "angel" in the disguise of flesh. He starts as a babe, and "grows." He "grows" as boys do, into manhood. His development is difficult to trace ; but that is the case with all growth, and specially with the growth of mind and heart and character. His mother's share in his moulding must have been large and decisive, as it is in nearly all who attain to greatness. He listens to teachers and preachers in the synagogues ; but He thinks for Himself, and shapes His own conclusions. Of these early endeavours we know little. There is only one

flash of light on the depths of his youthful experience, but it is enough to show the conception He has formed of Himself. In the sacred ardour of His soul He feels that He has a personal vocation, a call to His heavenly Father's work, that He is bound to obey ; thus showing how like He is to Samuel and Jeremiah, to Luther and Wesley, and others who heard the voice of the Eternal in youth, and were awe-struck with the fore-gleams of the work of the maturer years.

He lives with men as man. He is one of the workers, learns as they do, is wearied as they are, feels the pressure of the invading crowd on His inward life as we often do, and seeks the refreshing of silence, the peace of communion with God. We have no emotions He does not share, no feelings which are not His also, and no temptations befall us which do not also confront Him. The actuality of His humanity is thoroughgoing and complete ; and His action on the humanity round about Him proceeds from His own full and perfect humanity, and so gives to His Religion a catholicity, a freedom from place, an independence of time, a superiority to race and tribe which is one of its most distinguishing features.

It is our human nature He has, and it is on that human nature, with all its religious instincts and spiritual possibilities, He works so as to provide a religion that is broad with the breadth of the human race and filled with all the fulness of God.

(2) Again : It is the result of matured thinking which finds expression in the saying, "Do not for a moment suppose that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets. I have not come to abrogate them, but to give them their completion. Solemnly I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away not one iota or smallest detail will pass away from the law until all has taken place." Truth is eternal. The essential law of God cannot fail. It is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and the supreme work of Jesus is to advance it to its goal.

Jesus speaks as a second Moses, a new legislator, clad with regal authority and power as the creator of a new moral world[4] ; but He creates it in Israel, through Israel, and by Israel. Judaism is effete, and must pass away. It is a body without a soul ; a faith without works ; it is dead, and must be buried. It must be displaced by being

[4] Matthew v. 21, et seq.; ix. 13.

replaced—that is, the spirit which was once in it, the spirit of inward righteousness, to which the prophets gave voice, must have free course and ascend to the sovereignty of the world. Jesus assures His chosen disciples that that is the ground of their election to service, and the reason for His counsels of perfection ; for they, and not the Pharisees and Essenes, are "the light of the world" ; they, and not the Scribes and Sadducees, are "the salt of the earth" ; they, as the interpreters and advocates of the new Religion, and not the Hebrew hierarchy, will preserve the rest of mankind from utter corruption, and shed a healing light over the nations. So Christ assures His followers that He completes the plan, and realizes the ideal of the old religion, saves them from the current false interpretations of the law, the crippling traditions of the elders, and the tyranny, formalism, and unreality that are destroying the people.

(3) Nor can it be doubted that another of the constituent factors in the consciousness of Jesus was the conviction of His *Messiahship*. Not at once does He declare Himself to men in this character. He is content to wait for recognition.

He trusts to the impression His character and work will make on His followers rather than to repeated insistence upon His claims. He is the friend before He is the Master, the helper before He is the Sovereign; and for that reason, and probably also because of the risks to His work of any premature disclosure of His Messiahship, it is quite late in His ministry that He asks the question of His disciples, "What is your impression concerning Me? What conclusion have you reached?" But the conviction is in His mind as one of the impelling forces of His life. It is present in His acts and in His words. It appears in reply to the attacks of his foes, as well as in clearing away the misconceptions of His friends. He bears Himself as one sent of God. He claims to give the true interpretation of an institution so ancient and sacred as the Sabbath, on the ground of that assured faith.[5] Great as is the Temple, its glory pales before the splendours of His spiritual and ethical revelation as the Son of Man.[6] He accepts the confession that He is the "Christ," made by His disciples, and begins thereupon to tell them of the suffering

[5] Mark ii., 27, 28. [6] Matt. xii., 6.

and death His Messiah-hood involves,[7] and He does not refuse the homage of strangers who recognize Him in this relation.[8] Bousset sums up his investigation of Jesus as the Messiah in the words: "Thus the Messianic idea was the only possible form in which Jesus could clothe His inner consciousness, and yet an inadequate form; it was a necessity, but also a heavy burden which He bore in silence almost to the end of His life; it was a conviction which He could never enjoy with a whole heart."[9]

Is it not here, also, that we must place that self-descriptive phrase so familiar to readers of the Gospels, "The Son of Man?"

The latest answer is "No." Jesus, it is alleged, "employs the name 'Son of Man,' not to denote, but to connote Himself. He means neither Himself, actually or merely, nor the Messiah actually or merely, but He puts a person for a principle as picturesque thinkers love to do";[10]

[7] Mark viii., 27, 31; ix., 12, 31; x., 33, 34, 38, 45.

[8] Mark x., 47.

[9] "Jesus": By Professor W. Bousset. Williams & Norgate. p. 180.

[10] "The Religion of all Good Men." By H. W. Garrod. Constable & Co; 1906. p. 42.

so that the inexpressibly bold description of Himself in the house of the "reprobate" tax collector, Zaccheus, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost," only means "the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom for the poor and miserable and sinful"; and, in short, Jesus is not describing Himself in any other light than as "the forerunner of the Messiah who is yet to come"; not Himself, but "someone other than Himself."

This is the strangest piece of exegesis I have seen; but let us weigh the facts.

(a) It is admitted that the phrase, "Son of Man," occurs very frequently, not only in the fourth Gospel, but also in the Synoptics; indeed, "it was always in His mouth," and "was not likely to be falsely attributed to our Lord in a later age,"[11] and it is added that the passages in John should not be lightly set aside."

(b) Moreover, it is not denied that the writers of the Synoptics "understood Christ to mean Himself by the phrase 'Son of Man,'[12] and that the passages in the context bear that meaning." Is it not, then, the very wantonness of subjective

[11] Ibid. pp. 27, 28. [12] Ibid. p. 32.

interpretation, in the face of such admissions, to affirm that Jesus is simply speaking of Himself as the forerunner of a coming Messiah, and not of Himself as discharging that function ?

(c) Take the case of Christ's trial, when Jesus, in the fullest maturity of His development, is challenged to self-description by the High Priest. He is in His closing days. The question is what we call "a leading question," and is expressly intended to force Jesus to incriminate Himself, either by silence or by speech. "Thou art, art Thou, the Son of the Blessed ?"[13] The enquiry could not have been put in more specious or solemn form, or in a way more likely to elicit, if answered in the affirmative, the proof of blasphemy. It is, therefore, a most critical moment. Silence will mean abdication of the claim to Messiahship. Speech will involve its denial or affirmation. Jesus speaks, and at once replies by taking the word of *Daniel*, and applying it to Himself ; claims, in effect, that in Him the most august of the Messianic promises is fulfilled. It is a great claim. He goes behind the

[13] The Greek word translated "Blessed," says Gould, is not found elsewhere in the New Testament except as a predicate of God in doxologies. It means one who is worshipped. Prof. Gould, on "Mark." p. 279.

materialized anticipations of the people of Palestine, and asserts that He realises the true Messianic hope in the establishment of the kingdom of God, the introduction of that ideal social order which consists in the harmony of the life of man and of society with the Divine. This, at least, if not more—I think much more—is involved in the language used by Jesus when He speaks of Himself as the sent of God, and as "the Son of Man," and justifies us in saying, that one of the working ideas of Jesus was that He had a unique place in the evolution of the higher life of mankind.[14]

(4) But additional evidence in support of this reading is offered in the conviction of Jesus that He is not only the Messiah, sent and qualified of God, but sent expressly for the redemption of the world.

The picture of Jesus is that of a Saviour. His name imports it, His spirit was full of it, His speech throbs with it, and His life was given for it. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many; not merely to teach, but to seek and to save that which is lost.

[14] See Note Pages 177, 178.

His redeeming love thrills us in the parables of the Lost Sheep, of the Lost Coin, and of the Lost Son ; in the story of the Good Samaritan ; in the pathetic fate that overtakes Dives, and in the feast with the tax-collector, Zaccheus. He knows what is in man that ought not to be there ; that hurts him, that debases and enslaves him ; and He comes as the Liberator and Restorer, to expel sin, and to place God on His throne. God is love, and He manifests it ; God is forgiveness, and He mediates it ; God is deliverance, and He proclaims it.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,

"Because He hath anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor :

"He has sent Me to announce release to the prisoners of war,

"And recovery of sight to the blind ;

"To send away free those whom tyranny has crushed ;

"To proclaim the year of acceptance with the Lord."

The humble penitent Publican is pardoned and justified, whilst the Pharisee who thinks all is well with him misses the peace and strength of God.

The prodigal son is welcomed to the Father's heart and home. Surely there is authority enough for the idea of the fourth Gospel as expressive of the sovereign purpose of Jesus : "I am come that men may have life, and that they might have it abundantly." [15]

(5) But we do not reach the central fact in the consciousness of our Lord until we come to that vivid and all-dominating sense of oneness with God which is the very breath of the spirit of Jesus, and the source of all He is, all He purposes, and all He achieves. Without putting any strain upon the phrase, "Son of God," which some of our critics tell us was never used by Jesus of Himself,[16] and also without importing any material from the writings of John, we are compelled to affirm that the unique constituent in the consciousness of

[15] Cf. "Jesus would claim to have done more than make the best ideal clear for men, and more than live it out before them. As the Messiah of God, He claimed to set men no mere task to do, but to give to them God's perfect gift to enjoy. He was confident that He could so uplift men that they would be able actually to enjoy the highest good in a life of utter submission to God, and therefore in a life of love." "The Communion of the Christian with God." By Dr. W. Herrmann. p. 76.

[16] See Note Page 178.

Jesus is the conviction of His filial relation to, and oneness with, the Father. It descends upon Him in His boyhood and invests His youth with prophetic charm. It persists from the beginning to the close of His public ministry, asserting itself with increased strength in the fiercest crises of temptation. It renders Him invincible under the onset of His foes. It is solace and joy when His work is rejected by men of culture and wisdom, and His mission is blighted by failure. It is as an angel strengthening Him in the agonies of the Garden of Gethsemane, and it is not altogether lost, even in the thick darkness of the Cross ; for though He feels as if He were left to tread the wine-press alone, yet He still clings in loving trust to His Father, and cries, not in doubt, but in faith and assurance, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?"

God is with Him, and He is with God. They are one in the deepest and most intimate sense. "All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and no one fully knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone fully know the Father except the Son, and all to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." [17]

He is the Son of the Father, and as a son with a father, so is He one with God, one with the Eternal Will, and the Eternal Love, and the Eternal Life—*i.e.*, with the Eternal Spirit at work in the whole of our human life, redeeming it from evil and advancing it to good, and therefore His consciousness is the consciousness of God. He thinks as God thinks, feels as God feels, wills as God wills, acts as God acts ; and so God, hidden from the ages, not seen by anyone, is manifested in Jesus. In this human, perfectly human, Jesus, is seen the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person. If the heart of Christianity is to be felt beating anywhere, it is there. It is not too much to add from John's Gospel, "He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father."

Dr. Sanday says "there can be no question that the central constituent in that consciousness was the complete and unclouded sense of the filial relation, evidenced at once by perfect mutuality of knowledge between the Son and the

[17] Matthew xi. 27, 30. Cf. Knowling's "St. Paul," pp. 293-7.
"Cambridge Theological Essays," edited by Swete. p. 455.
Harnack's "What is Christianity?" p. 127.
Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible." IV. p. 574.

Father, and perfect submission and response on the part of the Son to the Father's will. On this head it may be said that the critics of all shades are agreed. . . . A scientific examination of the Gospels, whatever else it brings out, brings out this—that the root-element in the consciousness of Jesus was a sense of Sonship to the Divine Father, deeper, clearer, more intimate, more all-embracing and all-absorbing than ever was vouchsafed to a child of man." [18]

(6) One other factor deserves special mention, and that is our Lord's underlying sense of His oneness with the future, and with the fortunes of humanity, as well as with God.

Our critics are just now giving an exaggerated prominence to the references made by Jesus in His later ministry to the overthrow of the Jewish State, and assigning to the forecast of that catastrophe an exaggerated influence upon His work, and upon the development of Christianity.

There is no doubt that Christ did not limit His outlook to His own age or country. He was a Jew, and had His eye always upon the future; but in discerning that future He passed the

[18] Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible." IV. pp. 574, 575.

boundaries of Palestine and of His own time. He saw the unavoidable issues of the falsehood and imposture of the religious life of the time. To Him, as to the Baptist, the axe of judgment was already struck right into the roots of the tree of the Jewish nationality. That generation could not outlive the day of doom. But what about His own work? How would that fare? Would that go down in the general wreck? Must the good seed, which is "the Word of God," rot in the earth? No. Some of it would perish; but other parts would yield thirty, sixty, and even a hundred fold. His own words will not pass away. They are true in Him who is True. They partake of the eternity of God. The Religion He has founded is like yeast which a woman takes and buries in a bushel of flour, for it to work till the whole mass has risen. Rejected by the Jews, the Gospel will be welcomed by the nations. The wedding of God and humanity will be celebrated with great rejoicing, even though the chosen people in their pride of race refuse to attend the feast. The catastrophe at Jerusalem will not be the extinction, but the liberation, of the energies of the Gospel.

Thus Jesus identifies Himself and His Religion with humanity and its fortunes, and justifies us in applying to Him the language of one of the letters of the New Testament, and asserting that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, *the* Man Christ Jesus." He is the middle point in the vast universe of being, uniting in Himself both the divine and the human, God and man, embracing all the higher and the lower relations of man to God and of God to man, and of man to man, the realization of God in humanity and of man in divinity.

So Jesus thinks of Himself; so His disciples thought and spake of Him; and the Person thus revealed is one with the Ideas which are the Life and Power of His Religion.

III.

Thus far we have only examined our sources so far as the Gospels are concerned, and have restricted our attention to the Synoptical records. But from this investigation it is manifest that these sources supply us with all that we need to make us sure of the Founder of the Christian Religion, of His ideas, of the impressions His teaching and work made upon His friends and associates; and

of that personality which is the fountain head of all. We may know Him, and knowing Him assure ourselves as to His Religion in its totality ; for that totality is Himself. The data within our reach, historically treated, will yield the character and contents of the Christianity of Jesus Christ.

That, however, is not all. There are other facts, and there are the illuminations and confirmations of the evangel contained in the Christian experiences of the first century.

(1) The pre-eminence of the first disciples is in this—that they came by slow degrees to understand the meaning of the consciousness of Jesus, arrived at the secret of His personality, and manifested its contents in the communities they formed, in the forces they liberated, in the ideas they taught, and in the new moral world that sprang from their enthusiastic and heroic activity. The Christ of Palestine is revealed in their glad subjection to Him as Master, and in His ascendency to the Lordship of the Ages. They embody His ideas in institutions of singular fascination and strength. They express their love and devotion to Him with such energy and adventurousness that their opponents are obliged

to admit the effect Jesus has had upon them. With heroic heart and seeing eye, they stand forth as witnesses for Christ, until they are encompassed and spiritually embraced by a great cloud of the holy, of the men and women called to be saints, scattered over an area wide as the empire of Rome, and vastly more powerful.

(2) The New Testament is the literary monument of the leaders of this movement, as the ethical superiority of the Christian societies of the first century is its vindication.

The Gospel and Letters of John are the final effort of the first disciples of Jesus to convey to others the impression of Christ's moral power and the grace of His perfect goodness, a goodness which nothing could mar; of His meekness, a meekness which nothing could subdue; of His strength, a strength which nothing could undermine; and of His loving self-sacrifice, a self-sacrifice which nothing could exhaust.

The Gospel is late in time. It is enriched by explanatory notes and reflections, as from one who is interpreting Jesus to the men of His own time, and in the light of the thought of His age. At points it is of the nature of a commentary on the

Synoptics ; the commentary of one who had a first-hand acquaintance with the common stock from which they all draw, and therefore can supply illustrations of the Person whose portrait they all paint. He traces to their sources the life and light and love of Jesus, makes clear the oneness of the Father and the Son, and so tells them and us what it is to be a Son of God, and what such a Son may be and do.[19] It confirms all that is obvious in the records of the first three ; illumines some of their obscure hints, and adds ideal elements from the long experiences of the disciples of Christ, which serve to make the reality more manifest.

Another distinctive expression of the mind of the early Church concerning Christ, is supplied in the Letter to the Hebrews ; distinctive, and yet based on the same sort of thinking, and drawn from the same substantial facts as John's. Jesus is set in His true place amongst the messengers of the Eternal. He ranks higher than Aaron or Moses, than angel or prophet, because He is the Son of the Father, in a unique sense, knows the Father and all that is in the Father's mind. He is the

[19] See Note Pages 178-180.

exact image of the essence of God. He is the radiance of the glory of God ; and the religion He gives is the best possible religion, the final and universal religion, because in it He reveals man's free and unrestricted access to God, and makes possible his unclouded communion with God. It shows the Consciousness of Jesus repeating itself in those who have acquired a deep inward conviction of having been adopted as sons of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ.

(3) But the New Testament is only one of the outstanding witnesses to the energy and greatness of Jesus. The whole century is full of Him. Its facts and forces, its great personalities, its reigning ideas ; its institutions and movements are inexplicable apart from Him. They take their rise in Him, and offer us an enormous amount of material for verifying the conclusions we have reached as to His thoughts about Himself, His Mission and His Religion, from our study of the portraiture given in the Gospels. Jesus has become a new conscience and a new consciousness for the community of disciples ; and through them He is making all things new.

IV.

Another fact it is imperative to note; and that is, that the development of Christianity is itself a criticism of the contents of Christianity, and a persistent rejection of that which is alien to the spirit, the ideas, and the personality of the Founder.

The new movement has not advanced far before it becomes necessary to protect it from its friends. When Peter is withstood to the face by the Apostle Paul, it is because he is imperilling the catholicity of the Gospel he preaches, and is on the point of adding to the Gospel that which would destroy it. The saints at Jerusalem are in danger of imprisoning the good news of salvation within the walls of Judaism. Paul resists with all his energy and eloquence the policy of accepting the "totality of the movement originated by Jesus," as the criterion of the Christian Religion. Not for him any standard of the "first six years" or the first "twenty-six." It is to the Christians of his own day that he is speaking when he says, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and tell you now, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ." It is the Colossians he warns against

accepting, "vain traditions and false philosophies"; and it is to Christians generally that he has to proclaim that "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; but the faith that secures the new nature, that works by love; that keeps the Commandments of God; it is that which is all in all." "Guard the Gospel deposit," cries Paul to young Timothy. It is a treasure of incalculable value. It reveals the secret of godly living; the secret hidden for ages; but at last manifested in Christ. See that it does not suffer loss. Defend it against good but mistaken men, who would destroy it with their insistence on the trivialities of ritual, wasteful word-fights and ascetic practices.

"Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings," cries the writer to the Hebrews, "Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Take heed of men who would rehabilitate Judaism in the name of Christ. Beware of false developments of the Christian faith. The historical Jesus Christ is the guiding principle of all Christian teaching and practice.

What a pitiful story John tells at the end of the century of the appearance of many Anti-Christs;

and with what energy he bids us remember that we can only really advance as we cling to what we have learnt historically about Jesus. In "going onward 'we must always' abide in the teaching of Christ." [20] With what vigorous thrusts Jude exhorts men to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints! In short, the story of the development of Christianity, is one of development by vigilance, by the instant rejection of corrupting practices, by the bold and persistent discrimination between what Christianity is not and what it is, and by the steadfast "remembrance of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David," but "with us even unto the end of the age."

(2) The annals of Christianity from the beginning are in this respect like the New Testament. The history of the Christian Religion is a ceaseless criticism of the "totality of the movement,"—so as to sift the essence from the accidents, the substance from the form, and to secure a rejection of all elements fatal to the growth of the ideas and spirit of Jesus among men. The second century reports a succession

[20] 2 John v., 9.

of efforts to purify Christianity from the accretions already clustering around it, and hiding its essential beauty from men. Tertullian, the fervid and brilliant exponent of the earliest Nonconformity, sought to disencumber the Religion of Christ from the burdens philosophy and imperialism had already laid upon it. Chrysotom in a later date calls men away from the corruptions of the Churches to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ in the Scriptures;[21] and the story of sifting and of rejection increases with the years. After a long pause, the Renaissance furnishes the instruments for the criticism of Religion through Erasmus and others, and the consequence is the swift rejection of the accumulated "degeneracies" of ages by the leaders of the Reformation. British history is a chapter in the same long struggle for light. Sometimes we speak as though to us only had been given the privilege of starting the Church on her journey back to her Lord; but what were the Lollards and the Puritans, what the Separatists and the Independents, the Baptists and the Quakers, but heroic souls engaged on the same enterprise, and

[21] See Note Page 180.

seeking the same result? In fact, Progressive Christians have been obliged from the beginning to spend more time and energy in saying what Christianity is *not*, than in telling what it *is*. The burden of their work has been to distinguish between the tree and the parasites, and to cut off the latter so that the tree might grow according to its original nature.

Life is a ceaseless battle, we are told; and the conditions of health compel us to reinforce the warriors who build up, against those who work to destroy. Christianity is life, and therefore it is no strange thing that has happened. All living communities have this element of friction; and were we to cease to sift and examine, to contend and reject, to say what Christianity is not, as well as what it is, we should soon have no Christianity left.

(3) In saying what Christianity is not, we must not confuse its origin with its significance, or suggest that what has really been developed from the simpler state may be judged by the criterion of its earlier *form* instead of its eternal substance.

Christ created a historical religion, and it has been developed under historical conditions, and

has taken up into itself ideas and usages derived from many sources, some of them most helpful to its growth according to its original form, and aiding a genuine evolution ; but others have been fatal to all advance. It is agreed that the true nature of a thing is not determined by what it is when it starts, but by what it becomes ; but what it becomes must be of the true nature of the thing and not of some intruded and antagonistic element. Newman says, "The doctrine of a Trinity is found both in the East and in the West ; so is the ceremony of washing ; so is the rite of sacrifice. The doctrine of the Divine Word is Platonic ; the doctrine of the Incarnation is Indian ; of a divine kingdom is Judaic ; of angels and demons is Magian ; the connection of sin with the body is Gnostic ; celibacy is known to Bonze and Talapoin ; a sacerdotal order is Egyptian ; the idea of a new birth is Chinese and Eleusinian ; belief in sacramental virtue is Pythagorean ; and honours to the dead are a polytheism." But no one can maintain that all these doctrines may be assimilated by Christianity and the Christianity of Jesus remain. Far from it. Christianity absorbed the Roman Empire ; and what followed ? The Roman

Catholic Church of the middle ages, which is "the ghost of that Roman Empire sitting crowned upon its grave."[22] It stood out against that Empire, endured its contradictions against itself, resisting even unto blood and death; then it became the favourite of the Empire, and next, its heir and residuary legatee, and handed on to Europe and the world, the Roman law, the Roman order, the Roman discipline and arts of life. But it is the Roman Empire that is left and not Christianity. That has gone from the *system* altogether, though it continues in individuals; and yet the Church insists upon the name Catholic, as the Roman Empire did on universality, notwithstanding it is the most Anti-Catholic organization in existence.[23]

Christian theology, again, developed by assimilating Greek culture and philosophy; these it passed on to the Church, and gave shape to Christian ideas; but it is Greek thought still; not the teaching of Christ, and it issues in the erection of structures of dogmatism that hide the

[22] Cf. "The Cloister and the Hearth," by Charles Reade, D.C.L. Chatto & Windus, c. 74.

[23] See Note Page 181.

simple dwelling-places of the good news of redemption.

Nor is the damage wrought by this assimilation of alien ideas restricted to the Churches. Would that it were. One illustration, selected from scores, will suffice. The early Fathers deriving their ideas straight from Christ, upheld the sanctity of human life and denounced the sin of war; but when Christianity became a State Religion, that disapproval became weaker and weaker until Augustine could deliberately set out to prove, "that the practice of war was quite compatible with the teaching of Christ"; and so long did the mischief continue, that Dr. Westermarck declares, "It is impossible to ascribe to the Church any considerable part of the movement which ultimately led to the entire abolition of private war." [24]

V.

Our sources then, I hold, give us examples of the use of the test we employed in the two preced-

[24] "Origin and Development of Modern Ideas," by Ed. Westermarck, Ph.D. Vol. i., p. 141. Cf., for other illustrations, "Racial Supremacy," by J. G. Godard. Simpkin and Marshall, 1905, c. iv.

ing lectures, to settle what is *not* Christianity. One or two further uses of that test may be supplied.

(1) Clearly, Christianity is not sacerdotalism in Religion. Christ Himself was the relentless opponent of the priestism of His time. He not only did not create a sacerdotal order, but He rebuked the tendency to it in worship and in life. It is at variance with all His teaching. The further back the researches of historical students go, the less evidence do they find of sacerdotalism in the Christianity of Christ. Sacerdotalism is a pagan product projected into the non-priestly religion of Jesus. [25]

(2) Is it sacramentarianism? No, for emphasis on ritual is not in the least degree in keeping with the spirit of Jesus. He placed all stress on the inward and spiritual, and none on ceremonial. He exposed and condemned the sacramentarians of His day. His chief conflicts were with the false ideas and misleading practices of the Pharisees and Essenes. Their religion was not His. His Religion was in express antagonism to theirs. "Essenism was an anti-worldly monachism, and its chief features were an intense exclusiveness, a

[25] See Note Page 181.

withdrawal from the world, and a renunciation of all active effects upon it." Bousset asks, "What part or lot had Jesus with those strange anchorites who made it a rule that, if one of their number happened to meet any person not belonging to the Order, or even an initiated novice, he must immediately take a cleansing bath, because he had defiled himself? What was there in common between Jesus' eager desire to work while He had the light, between His joy in labour, and the cloister-like retirement of the Essenic sect? . . The Essenic Order was a sacramental community, and the main features of its pietism consisted in mystic rites, consecrations, bathings, and common meals of a sacrificial nature. Now Jesus is absolutely free from such tendencies; everything in His teaching is directed towards the spiritual and the personal." [26]

More abundant evidence is supplied in our sources of the persistent and vehement antagonism of Jesus to the misconceptions and follies of the Pharisees. He could not endure their slavery to the traditions of the elders, their ceaseless casuistry, their asceticism and formalism, their titheing and

[26] "Jesus," by W. Bousset, pp. 34, 35.

fasting, egotism and covetousness, ostentation and self-torture, contempt of the mass of men in the name of religion, and injury to men for the sake of sacramental worship.[27]

There is nothing more astounding in the history of Christianity than the way in which Societies calling themselves by Christ's name, have allowed themselves to be obsessed by a sacramentarianism against which Christ protested throughout His ministry, and on account of which protest He suffered death.

(3) It is not less certain that the Christianity of Jesus is not ecclesiasticism, nor can it be exclusively identified with any one ecclesiastical organization, or with all, without peril to its integrity, purity, and power. In the Christian, as in other religions, and in matters not religious, there is a natural and spontaneous social crystalisation of men holding the same, or similar ideas, stirred by the same, or similar emotions, and marching to the same goal. Dr. Moffat tells us that "to suppose that Jesus contemplated a visible Church as the embodiment of His Gospel, is almost to be guilty of a historical atrocity; but

[27] Cf. Matthew xxiii.

both Matthew and Acts i.—v., concur in representing the early Christians as rapidly organising themselves into community. This is a most significant fact, alike in its bearing on the temper and attitude of the people, and in its import as a presupposition for the growth of subsequent records of the Master; and the evidence of Paul corroborates the indirect allusions of Matthew to the organised body or bodies of primitive Christianity, as well as to the place which these occupied in the development of the evangelic tradition. (1 Cor. xv., 1—9.)" [28]

But no mistake has been more fatal to real religion than that of confounding its institutional forms with its eternal ideas; and treating the organization as an authority superior to the will and spirit of the Founder of the Religion. Against that error Jesus warned His disciples with increasing solemnity, as the day of His departure from them came nearer and nearer. And with obvious reason, for in His day, the institutional religion of Palestine was a sink of corruption. Jesus exposed it in scathing satire, denounced its

[28] "The Historical New Testament," by James Moffat, B.D., p. 269.

patrons with pitiless severity, and set it on high as a warning beacon to His followers ; bidding them remember "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

That feature of the ministry of the Saviour, alas ! has been much forgotten, and often altogether ignored by His disciples. The "Churches" have dethroned their Lord whilst professing to serve Him, corrupted His Gospel as they preached it, claimed to dispense the grace of God as though it were their own creation, proclaimed "salvation through the Church" instead of through the Redeemer, appealed to the Bible and then locked it up and taken the key away, demanded unreasoning obedience to their mandate and burnt those who refused to submit to it, enslaved the minds of men in the interests of religion, worked the engines of persecution in the name of the "Man of sorrows," and carried out the most deadly "Wars of Religion" under the flag of the Prince of Peace.

Perhaps the fatuity of these processes reaches its climax in the way in which the "Churches" deal with the Gospels. They claim to find their authority in the Gospels ; but in effect they over-

ride them. The "Church" rules. It says it is before the Gospels; gives us the Gospels, and therefore must say what the Gospels do, and do not mean. "The Church to teach and the Bible to prove," is the blinding formula in vogue. It would be as rational to assert that the Puritan Commonwealth gave us Milton's "Paradise Lost," and the Long Parliament created Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches. It is Paul, and not the "Church" at Jerusalem, or the "Churches" at Thessalonica and Philippi, who gave us more than half our New Testament. Much of his teaching was opposed by the Churches; and to the end he was warring against men who misconceived the revelation of God in Christ. The New Testament is the work of individuals, and though it came to be accepted by the Christian Societies afterwards, just as we have at last accepted Milton and Cromwell, yet it is "separable" from the Christian Churches as social organizations, and from the Christian creeds as products of the theologising members of those organizations; and ought to be open to every disciple of Christ, "to be treated by him as self-explanatory," and capable of standing the test of

personal experience, precisely as Milton's poems and Cromwell's letters.

To what lengths the doctrine of the "authority of the Church" has gone, history shows in many painful examples, one of which will suffice. "Conceive a Church," says Rev. T. W. Rolleston, "originally founded to proclaim the doctrines of the author of that lovely saying, so full of the fragrance of divinity, about the little children, declaring as a cardinal doctrine of its faith that since the promulgation of the Gospel, infants dying unbaptized are eternally excluded from the kingdom of heaven—putting into the mouth of Jesus the frightful sentence, "Suffer these *not* to come unto Me!" [29] With infinite pathos, Henry Sidgwick, dwelling on the confusions of Christianity created by the "Churches," describes himself, as one of those and they are a multitude which no man can number, who are "struggling for freedom of thought in the trammels of a historical religion." To all these the Master Himself says, as He did to the believing Jews, "As for you, if you hold fast to My teaching, you

[29] "Hibbert Journal," April, 1906. "The Resurrection," by T. W. Rolleston, page 633.

are truly My disciples, and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." [30]

(4) Again, the Christianity of Christ is not any one, or all, of the theologies created to express it. Necessary and inevitable, as I have shown elsewhere, theology is ; yet, even in its perfection, it must only be regarded as a passing interpretation of abiding facts ; a mirror held up to the face of the Founder of the Christian Religion.[31]

Thus, our sources tell us indubitably what is *not* Christianity ; and we may hope that we shall not find them less helpful when we seek to make ourselves sure as to what it really is.

[30] See Note Page 182. [31] See Note Page 182.

NOTE 2. PAGE 136.

JESUS IS HIMSELF THE GOSPEL.

"The Jesus who thinks thus of Himself, and who looks on men with such a confidence in His power to redeem them from the terrible misery He sees in all—that Jesus, I say, stands as a fact before us, and it is a fact that has no equal. The dying Buddha puts his confidence in the truth of his teaching ; he leaves to his disciples the admonition that they may forget him, but they are to keep his teaching and the way that he has shown them. Plato says the like of Socrates. Now in the whole wide range of history there is no other figure, apart from Jesus, which so surprises us with originality

of moral strength as do these two just named. But these two hid themselves modestly behind the teaching for which they lived and died, whereas Jesus knows no more sacred task than to point men to His own Person. His life and death proclaim the conviction that no man who desires true life can do without Him; everyone must concern himself with Jesus, and must take to heart the fact of His personal life. . . . The fact is this: that Jesus stands before us in history claiming to be Himself alone salvation for all men. . . . If, then, Jesus asserts that He brings such a Kingdom to men, He simply means this—that through the impression caused by His person men are brought into submission to God."

Dr. Herrmann's "Communion of the Christian with God." pp. 76, 77. Williams & Norgate.

Note 14. Page 149.

THE SON OF MAN.

"After careful consideration of the matter, the writer's conclusion is that Jesus Himself did use the term Son of Man; that He did not use it impersonally as indicating mankind generally, but personally as defining His own distinctive function, that it was not in current use as a designation of the Messiah, and that it was chosen to conceal His Messianic claim while serving gradually to reveal the contents of His Messianic ideal. That He was familiar with the *Similitudes* of the *Book of Enoch* the writer does not consider probable, and even if Jesus were so familiar, it seems to him still less probable that the significance of the term in the Gospels is to be determined by its meaning in that writing. We may be sure that He put His own meaning into the term He chose. It is by no means certain, as is sometimes assumed, that the *Book of Daniel* suggested the term to Him, although in the eschatological passages in which it is used a reference to that book is probable. There are other passages, however, which seem to show that Psalm viii. first of all suggested the use of the term. It is impossible, however, to trace the varied uses of

the title by Him to one source." Studies in the "Inner Life of Jesus." By Alfred E. Garvie, M.A., D.D. The *Expositor*, Seventh Series, Vol. I., pp. 498-9.

Note 16. Page 151.

THE SON OF GOD.

"We cannot be sure that the use of the title in the fourth Gospel, as by the Baptist (i. 34), and Nathanael (i. 49), or even by Christ Himself (v. 25, ix. 35, x. 36, xi. 4), is not an echo of contemporary Christian belief, as it was natural for the Evangelist, writing after so long an interval of time, to ante-date theological terms. This remark applies also to Matthew xiv. 23, xxvi. 63. One hesitates about applying the same criticism to Peter's confession in Matthew xvi. 16: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' but uncertainty must be induced by the comparison of the parallel records. Mark has only the words, 'Thou art the Christ' (viii. 29), and Luke 'The Christ of God' (ix. 20). If Peter did use the term, we must beware of importing into it all that it afterwards meant. He would use it as the loftiest title of the Messiah, and so would any who might have employed it during the earthly ministry of Jesus. We must not assume, however, that Jesus regards His Divine Sonship as primarily and distinctively a Messian honour or prerogative, but must seek for the roots of this religious consciousness in His unique nature." "Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus." By Alfred E. Garvie, M.A., D.D. The *Expositor*, Seventh Series, Vol. I., pp. 502-3.

Note 19. Page 159.

NOTE ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

For a most careful and balanced statement of the problem of the Fourth Gospel, see the Essay on "The Gospels in the light of historical criticism," by Dr. Frederic Henry Chase, in the Cambridge Theological Essays, pp. 381, 382.

Macmillan, 1906. "The Fourth Gospel presents problems, a *complete* solution of which has not been found, and probably never will be found. What are we to say of the difficulties which confront the traditional view, more especially of the marked contrast between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels? If, assuming that the author of the Fourth Gospel was himself a primary authority, we suppose that the relation of that Gospel to the Synoptic Gospels was designedly supplementary and corrective, we have given a reasonable account of many differences in matters of detail. But more fundamental variations still remain unexplained. In the Synoptic Gospels, for example, we trace the slow and halting recognition of our Lord's true character even on the part of the Twelve. The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, in the opening scene of the great drama, brings before us the Baptist pointing to Jesus as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'; Andrew making the great announcement to his brother, 'We have found the Messiah'; Nathanael confessing Jesus as 'the Son of God, the King of Israel.' It may, I think, be fairly urged that a disciple, whose mind was deeply spiritual and keenly sensitive of the mystical significance of words spoken under deep emotion, would treasure what other men of less subtilty and insight would fail to notice or would at once forget; while at the same time, as he often meditated on them, the form of mysterious sayings would insensibly coalesce in his memory with the interpretation which in the light of later belief he put on them. 'What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars.' The history of a great movement will be told long years afterwards with the nearest approach to truth, not by the prosaic observer who noticed only what lay on the surface, but rather by one who at the time discerned something of its grandeur, and who as he recalled it instinctively idealized it. Idealization is perhaps a necessary condition for the preservation of the memory of a momentous spiritual crisis.' But the best defence is in 'The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel,' by Dr. Drummond. He recognizes a 'large

ideal' element in the Gospel; but affirms its Johannine authorship." For the view that it was written by the Presbyter John, see, 'The Historical Christ,' by the Rev. T. A. Lacey, p. 68, et seq. See also a very luminous article by Dr. H. R. Reynolds, in Hastings' Bible Dictionary, under the article "John."

Note 21. Page 164.

BIBLE v. THE CHURCH.

"And why does he bid all Christians at that time to betake themselves to the Scriptures? Because at that time, when heresy hath got possession of those Churches, there can be no proof of true Christianity, nor any other refuge for Christians wishing to know the true faith but *the Divine Scriptures.* For before it was shown in many ways which was the Church of Christ, and which heathenism; but now it is known in no way to those who wish to ascertain which is the true Church of Christ, but *only through the Scriptures.* Why? Because all those things which are properly Christ's in the truth, those heresies have also in their schism; Churches alike, the Holy Scripture alike, bishops alike, and the other orders of clergy, baptism alike, the eucharist alike, and everything else; nay, even Christ Himself. Therefore, if anyone wishes to ascertain which is the true Church of Christ, whence can he ascertain it, in the confusion arising from so great a similitude, but only by the Scriptures? . . . 'Therefore, the Lord, knowing that such a confusion of things would take place in the last days, commands on that account, that the Christians who are in Christianity, and desirous of availing themselves of the strength of the true faith, should betake themselves to *nothing else but the Scriptures;* otherwise, if they should look to other things, they shall stumble and perish, not understanding which is the true Church.' St. Chrysostom. "Matt. Hom." xliii.

NOTE 23. PAGE 167.

THE CORRUPTION OF RELIGIONS.

"And whenever a great teacher has appeared, and has sought to elevate the religion of men, his system has soon been perverted and depraved. It has ever been so. Of the early Egyptian Religion, all that was sublime was demonstrably ancient, and its last stage was the grossest and most corrupt. In China, the lofty system of ethics, formulated by Confucius, has suffered the most deterioration. In India, the pure nature-worship of the Vedas has ended in superstitious puerilities. And the teaching of Gautama, sublime in the rejection of all idolatry and priestcraft, has ended in the gross asceticisms and superstitions of modern Buddhism. The Divine revelation of Judaism was degraded to the level of 'the Jews' Religion,' which made that race the common enemy of God and His people. And Christianity itself has been almost swamped by the religion of Christendom, that tangled skein of Divine truth and Pagan superstition. The whole history of the race records no exception to the rule." "The Buddha of Christendom," Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B., pp. 35, 36.

NOTE 25. PAGE 169.

PRIESTISM.

Comparative Religion demonstrates that priestism is a parasite that grows and menaces every new religious growth. Sir Edwin Arnold says, "The extravagance which disfigures the record and practice of Buddhism are to be referred to that inevitable degradation which priesthoods always inflict upon great ideas committed to their charge." Dr. Rhys Davids, says, "in the ninth Chapter of his 'Buddhism,'" "Lamaism, indeed, with its shaven priests, its bells, and rosaries, its images, and holy water, and gorgeous dresses, its service with double choirs, and processions, and creeds, and mystic rites, and incense, in which the laity are spectators only, the abbots and monks, and nuns of many

grades; its worship of the double Virgin, and of the saints and angels; its fasts, confession, and purgatory; its images, its idols, and its pictures; its huge monasteries, and its gorgeous cathedrals, its powerful hierarchy, its cardinals, its Pope, bears outwardly, at least, a strong resemblance to Romanism, in spite of the essential differences of its teachings, and of its mode of thought."

Note 30. Page 176.
THE APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE.

John viii., 31, 32. "The great religions of the world appeal to sacred writings for their sanction. But the religion of Christendom differs in this respect from the religions of the East, that its pretended appeal to Scripture is but a juggler's trick. It claims our acceptance of doctrines which none but the credulous would believe on human testimony; and when we demand to know when and where has God revealed them, the answer given us is that "He has founded a Church, and in and through the Church He speaks to us." When we seek authority for this, we are referred back to Holy Scripture; but when in turn we claim to be allowed access to Scripture, human tradition is foisted upon us instead. This sort of thing is well known in another sphere: 'ringing the changes' is what the vulgar call it!" "The Buddha of Christendom," pp. 87, 88, by Sir R. Anderson, K.C.B., L.L.D.

Note 31. Page 176.
THEOLOGY IN HISTORY.

Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," said, "It is, indeed, difficult to conceive any clearer proof than was furnished by the history of the *twelve hundred years after the conversion of Constantine*, that while theology has undoubtly introduced into the world certain elements and principles of good, scarcely, if at all, known to antiquity. . . it is by no means for the advantage of mankind that, in the form which the Greek and Catholic Churches present it, it should become a controlling arbiter of civilization."

PART II.

THE SECOND PROBLEM.

LECTURE V.

Christianity and "The Scheme of Things."

In beginning the fifth lecture of this series, I have to answer the second of the two questions with which we started, this course, viz., "What is the Christianity of Christ in its essence and spirit, in its abiding contents and characteristics, in its inseparable qualities and invincible forces?

We have already made ourselves sure that the *Sources* to which we have to go for all our certainties of knowledge as to what Christianity is, and what it is not, are three: (1) First, the *ideas* of Jesus as they dominate the records of His teaching; I say the ideas, and not the mere *words*. (2) The *impression* He produced upon the minds of His intimate friends and of His numerous and compact foes; and (3) the revelation He gave of

His innermost life, of His mind and heart, of His will and purpose, as these are opened up to us in the New Testament and in the experiences and creations of the Great Forty Years.

We have settled that authentic knowledge of the Christian Religion, as Jesus founded it, can be drawn from these original sources, *and from no others.*

(1) I repeat, "and from no others"; that is, from the Gospels, Epistles, Acts, and Apocalypse of the New Testament, and not from any *creed* or *creeds*, however venerable in age, sacred in association, or philosophical in expression; for such creeds are no more than the efforts of men to fix, in the literary forms of their day, their own interpretation of ideas and facts, which are as open to us as they were to them; and, therefore, whilst they may be of signal value as registers of the results of human thinking and experience, illuminating in many ways, yet they cannot take rank as sources of knowledge of original Christianity.

(2) The same is true of the social forms in which Christianity has, at successive stages in its history, embodied its life. For the "churches"

can only uphold the claim they make to rule over the minds and consciences of men by the contents of these same documents; and, as a matter of fact, always do base every shred of authority they exercise on the very words they find here, though with surprising unreason and audacity, they forthwith forbid free access to the same sources to anyone who will not agree beforehand to abide by the churches' finding.

Now we know from the New Testament itself *(a)* that it is not "the church" that makes the Religion of Jesus, but Jesus who gives the religion that embodies itself in a church or "churches"; *(b)* that the "Religion" was in existence *before* the church, that is, in Jesus Himself, who is at once the first Christian and the original type and pattern of the Christian Religion.

Moreover, within the same writings it appears that we must reckon with the fact of degeneration as well as development, with the arrest of life as well as with its progress; and that therefore we must, like the members of the New Testament churches, appeal from the church and the churches to the Lord Jesus Himself.

(3) Nor do the massed beliefs and practices of

these churches of "the first six" or last six centuries, or, indeed, any number of centuries, justify us in leaving the primal founts of the Christian Religion to find out what Christianity is. The accumulation of any number of noughts will not make a unit, nor will the addition of the contents of successive centuries—creedal, theological, and ecclesiastical—add one item to the stock of our information as to the exact character of original Christianity.

Least of all is it competent for us, as reasoning men, to accept the "totality of what is called the Christian movement"—that is, all and everything that passes current in our day throughout Christendom, as the Christianity of Jesus Christ.

Not any one, or all of these, are sources of evidence of the personal contents of the Religion of Jesus. Creeds, organisations, church beliefs and practices, offer valuable assistance in the use of the sources. History is a light where it is not an authority, and a beacon where it is not a fountain of knowledge. A full record of the ages through which the Christian Religion has passed has this one superlative value, amongst others, that it enforces with overwhelming strength

the necessity of repairing to the original fountains, if the Religion of Jesus is to be kept fresh and strong, robust and pure, quickening and uplifting; and therefore the student in search of the real Religion of Jesus must rigidly keep in use his three-fold test, viz., the consciousness of Jesus, the ideas of Jesus, and the impression He painted of Himself on the minds of His contemporaries.

II.

I take as the key-thought for our investigation of the *contents* of these sources of the Christian Religion, a great saying of Professor Luthardt, namely, "The way in which a man thinks of God and the world, and their relation to one another, is decisive for the whole tendency of his thought, and even in the questions of the purely natural life."

It is a man's view of the meaning and ends of life that really counts. That is "decisive," not only of his answers to questions of religion, but to all the questions he has to face. It is his view of life as an ordered whole and in its upward and outward relations, not his interpretation of this or that isolated fact or striking event, but his habitual idea of the "scheme of things," his dominant conviction, conscious or unconscious,

as to life as a whole ; his exposition of himself and his place in the midst of the things of his world ; his idea of the drift and issues of the total sum of things in which he has now a share or may have a share at some future time ; it is that which settles all.

A little reflection forces upon us the conclusion that, however fateful may be the choices of a man at certain crises of his career, even these are determined by the implicit answer he gives to such questions as "What am I ? Why am I here ? What is the purpose of this struggle, and in what will it result" ? Let him assume or assert that the world is a mistake, his place in it a pitiable blunder, his doom a malady that cannot be escaped, and he will say "life is not worth living ; it were better ended, and ended swiftly ; suicide is a duty and maybe an advantage." Or should he say the world is one vast Eden of limitless pleasure, and the supreme duty is the satisfaction of every desire, then he will roam from luxury to luxury, satiated but not satisfied, bustling but never growing, his inward being becoming hard, dry, and shrivelled with each successive gratification. If, again, like the Puritans, he regards

the world as God's school-house, experience as a succession of disciplines for a larger and nobler being, under finer conditions, then he will face its hard things heroically, its inexplicable things patiently, its joyous things thankfully, and its dangerous things thoughtfully, as one resolved not to be hoodwinked or entrapped, but to come off more than conqueror, assured that the apocalypse of the future will supply the completest vindication of all the conditions of his training. Yet further; if he should add to this educational view of the universe the conception that life is an opportunity for self-sacrificing service to his age, of burning up evil and enthroning right and truth, then he will seek and find the culture of his spirit, the good of men, and the glory of his Creator.

It is the view of life that counts. Jesus, therefore, starts His work as a preacher with the proclamation of a new conception of the world of His day. He breaks the silence of the years with the thrilling proclamation, "The time is fully come! The kingdom of God is at hand! Repent! Change your stand-point. Leave the lowlands of tradition. Come up to the Pisgah heights.

Push away from you the conventional interpretation of life. Rise to the higher planes of thought, and welcome the good news of the actual reign of the all-powerful and redeeming God." It was a summons to a fresh and uplifting view of life, and he who accepts it (Paul tells us) is in Christ, and is "a new creation," with a new conception of God, a new idea of himself and of his world, and henceforth lives a new life.

You may see this principle illustrated in a modern experience, in a different sphere, in a most convincing way. Mazzini, the real liberator of Italy, hears in his early manhood the call to deliver his country, and after anxious thought accepts it; but, like all who devote themselves to enterprises of great pith and moment, he is at once led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devils of pleasure, ease, and fleeting fame. He successfully resists; and tells us in a fine passage how he triumphed. "One morning," he says, "I awoke to find my mind tranquil, and my spirit calmed, as one who has passed through a great danger. The first thought that passed across my spirit was: 'Your sufferings are the temptations of egotism, and arise from a misconception of

life.' I set myself to re-examine, now that I was able to do so calmly, both myself and surrounding things. I rebuilt my entire edifice of moral philosophy. I came to my better self alone, without aid from others, through the help of a religious conception which I verified from history. From the idea of God I descended to the idea of progress; from the conception of progress to the true conception of life, to faith in a mission and its logical consequences, duty as the supreme rule of life, and having reached that faith, I swore to myself that nothing in this world should again make me doubt or forsake it. It was, as Dante says, 'passing through martyrdom to peace.'"

That was Mazzini's repentance. He changed his view that morning of the whole "scheme of things"; and that changed the man, set him immovably in the right path, dedicated him to all that climbing it involved, and placed him in a position where he not only saved Italy, but illuminated and quickened Europe, by the promulgation of his liberating ideas, and the powerful impact he gave to every movement for delivering men from tyranny and oppression.

(2) Now as it is with an individual so it is with a religion; what counts in a religion is its solution of the problem of the "scheme of things."

Religions must finally take their rank according to their teaching about the significance of this whole mundane movement, this entire universe of thought, action, and life, a universe composed of interdependent parts, not without contradictory and confusing elements, but apparently ordered and definitely ruled to a certain end. The value of religions is measured by their complete world view; the conception they supply of nature and of man, and of the relations of both to each other; of God and man, and the relations they sustain to one another; of the present trend and ultimate outcome of all things.

Nearly every religion attempts a coherent exposition of the universe. Fetichism may know nothing about a theory of the universe; it does not think enough to know; but it is there in its inevitable attribution of spirit to the movement of material things. Positivism may say it cannot be known, and lock the door against inquiry, because it refuses to think enough to

know. But really influential Religions are not content to speak on particular and concrete facts and events and ignore their relation to the whole order of things. They seek some formative, unifying principle, or final purpose and goal, and so create the skeleton, if not more, of a system of thought and life in exposition of "the scheme of things." They cannot escape the task; or if they do, it is at the peril of completely failing in their ministry to men.

Each religion has some truth, satisfies some craving, ministers to some need of the soul, or it disappears.

> "Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light,
> Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven."

If Mahomet had not proclaimed the unity of God and the actuality of His sovereign and irresistible rule, he could not have broken up the anæmic Christianity of his day, paganized and debased as it was. If Buddhism had not urged with persistent emphasis the duty of seeking the "eightfold right," and of cultivating the spirit of self-sacrifice, it would not have captured the spirits of millions of our fellows; and so it is with all religions. Man seeks the perfect whole,

and cannot rest till he finds it. Thought goes forward to the completest determination of its objects. The intellect craves unity. That is its predestined goal. The heart seeks rest and peace in ordered and harmonious ideas. The human mind may find a lodging for a little while in this or that half-way house ; but it is not a true home, and the intellect and heart will push on until they find one. Denials will not satisfy. Refusals to grapple with the problem will not bring content. The loudest tones of ecclesiastical or scientific authority will be in vain. Man seeks, and must seek, the living formative principle, the architectonic idea, that places all the facts of the universe in their true perspective, and makes of them a coherent system. It is certain that the religion which gives the key to the truest and fullest exposition of the "scheme of things" is the one that is most sure of the future.

III.

The verbal form of the key-idea of Jesus is as familiar as a household word. It lay close to His hand. It was part of every day's talk. It rang out in the schools of the Rabbis, and it was not absent from the speech of the market-place.

Agitators seized it as a sword, brandished it about, inflaming the hearts of their hearers with the hopes of freedom it suggested, and stirring them to revolt by the visions it suggested. Scholars debated over its meaning as they found it in their classical texts. In short, "the kingdom of heaven" was the one phrase that expressed the current view of human life in Palestine.

But to Jesus it was only a formula, and of course He could not rest in it. It was a symbol: historic, venerable, and cherished; but Israel was a flaming witness to the fact that the "letter," were it never so infallible and inspired, only "kills"; it is "the spirit that gives life." Still, even the letter has its uses, and we cannot dispense with it. So Jesus took the phrase as His text, and made it the vehicle of His larger and richer thought. Men would hear Him upon such a theme, notwithstanding His revolutionary ideas and daring attacks on the erudite, but barren priestly caste, and therefore He used it. It offered anchorage for the inconstant and floating thought of the people around Him. It had started into shape under a mighty inspiration of God, a great uplift of the soul of Israel; but it had been set

to do the hackwork of political partisans, and bandied about by men who thought of little else than the maintenance of their own "Church" and the increase of their ecclesiastical authority. Hence it was weighted with associations that had to be removed, although it was susceptible of fine issues.

(2) Moreover, John the Baptist was the pioneer of Jesus, partly in method, as well as in person; for he, too, had taken up the same verbal form, added to its popularity, fired it with his passion, and filled it with his energy; just as we to-day in our conflicts take up the words liberty, equality, righteousness, and progress. Indeed, it was John's great word, and he shot it through the wilderness of Judea on wings of flame. For it is the personality at the back of a word that settles whether it is static or dynamic—a form or a power—and the Baptist was a real man if not a complete man; a man who gathered up into himself mighty energies, and forced them into the phrase "the kingdom of heaven," so that in his speech it stood for judgment—swift, immediate, decisive, overwhelming. Hear him! "To what shall I liken the kingdom of heaven? It is like to an axe,

sharp of edge, and tempered to utmost fineness, which a man of might took with both hands, and drove into the root of a barren, but gaily-bedecked tree, fetching it down to earth. Again, to what is it like? It is like a farmer who goes with his "fan" in his hand to his threshing-floor, and separates the chaff from the wheat, sending the wheat into his granary for further use, but setting fire to the chaff till it is utterly burnt up." That is the Baptist's view of the world. It is an inexorably just world, ethical from top to bottom, ruled in righteousness by a God who whets His glittering sword for the complete destruction of everything that offends and that works iniquity.

(3) It is this same text that Jesus uses, but it is not the same preacher. Ah! how often have we thought it is the new preacher that makes the difference, not the text. The text is a form; the preacher is, or should be, a soul. It is the old form we hear. It is still "the kingdom of heaven"—"the kingdom of God." Yes, but it is a new expositor, and He deals with His text in a new way.

What, then, is altered? Everything is altered.

There is nothing left of the old except the letters. It is the "kingdom," to be sure ; but the king is new, the subjects are new, the geographical area is new, the laws are new, the crown is new, the sceptre is new. "Behold, all things are new." It is a new universe. For Jesus packs into the compass of this phrase the whole wealth of His revelation of God—and of His interpretation of man ; of man's nature and relations to the world of nature, of his capacities and possibilities, of his responsibilities and destiny ; and not only of man the individual, but also of *social* man, man in community, sharing other lives and enriching them, entering into other interests and promoting them, carrying the strength of the strong to the succour of the weak, the wealth of the rich to the relief of the poor, and establishing justice for all. He adds to the old saying, not as mere embroidery, but as revelation, His illuminating parables of the kingdom—parables of "linked sweetness long drawn out," His interpretations of nature as the picture gallery of God and man ; and so the phrase becomes the key used by Christ, first for the interpretation of the natural world, next for the exposition of the long story of human history,

and lastly for solving the mystery of man and God.

IV.

But the most distinctive fact is that Jesus puts Himself into the phrase, the "kingdom of heaven." He is the King; and at bottom, *who* rules makes the difference! Strictly, it is not the kingdom that makes the king; it is the king that makes the kingdom. It is not the area of rule that is the test of the kingdom, but the character and aims of the ruler. The kingdom may be large and distracted, as the Empire of Russia under the Czar; or small, contented, and progressive, as Denmark. It is not even the laws of the kingdom considered in themselves, that constitute the critical element of rule, though their influence is immense. No! it is *who* really reigns, and *what* is He? Woe to the country whose king is a child; and not less, but more woe to the land whose sovereign people are drunk with war-passion, blinded by grasping greed, or cursed by a tyrannical priestism. *Who* is king is thus the first and last question; and the answer of Jesus is, "I that speak unto you am He." The kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ. The

actual ruler is Jesus Himself.

First of all, and in demonstrable fact, He rules ; that is, He sways and shapes the lives and destinies of men, commands their homage and obedience, and inspires their loyalty ; and subsequently by general acclamation He is confessed by thousands as Lord and King. At the beginning, He rules in the souls of a few, recognizes their growing confidence in His character, their increasing knowledge of His teaching, and exults in that outburst of heroic faith from the soul of the eager Peter as he declares, "Thou art the Christ." Afterwards He is confessed as "Lord and God" by the most severely sceptical of His followers ; and then thousands respond with admiring devotion to the declaration that God has made Him both Lord and Christ. Paul, speaking for his fellow-believers, attests that the name of Jesus, the crucified, is lifted above every name, as He who owns it is exalted to the right hand of God the Father ; and when he describes the concentrated passion of his life, he says, "For me to live is"—"the kingdom?"—No ! The King—the "Christ." John speaks of Him as the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, King of kings and Lord of lords. Say

what we will, this is not to be denied—that the real ruler of the life of the world in the first century was Jesus of Nazareth. That is indisputable. The kingdom had come! Jesus rules!

It is not only the witness of our sources; it is the uncontradicted verdict of all history. The supreme Personality of the first hundred years of our era is Jesus. The kingdom of God was visibly the kingdom of Jesus.

By great personalities God has led the generations on from one moral height to another; rising up early and sending His prophets at the dawn of man's day. That has been His method in all ages and in all lands. Greece is witness as well as Israel, China as well as Rome. At last Christ Jesus *the* man, the Mediator between God and man comes—the mightiest among the mighty, the holiest amongst the holy appears, lifts the world out of its ancient grooves, and sends it moving on to a higher plane; "a lever to uplift the earth and roll it on another course";—the Christian Religion is founded; the kingdom of God has come.

It is this fact, that Jesus is the actual ruler in the spiritual, that is, in the governing life of mankind,

that supplies the Christian, and, as I hold, the only true solution of the problem of "the scheme of things." Jesus and the "kingdom of God" are so completely identified that they are one; and, therefore, the starting-point of the Christian view of the world is not, Christ without the kingdom, nor the kingdom without Christ; but Christ reigning as unquestioned Master and Sovereign Lord, obeyed with heedless heroism and served with a death-daring devotion; thereby showing Himself to be the regulative principle and vital bond of the world's spiritual life. Or, translating the language of the New Testament into the speech of to-day, it cannot mean less than that the spirit of Jesus is the supreme ruling personality, and that His Religion is realised in Him as well as founded by Him; that He is the ground-plan of the world, an essential part of it; centre and goal of it; and that in Him, and in His Religion, we see as we see nowhere else;

(1) The world aim;

(2) The world processes for realising the aim;

(3) The forecast of the world's destiny;

and in these three we have Christ's view of the whole of life.[1]

(1) The world aim is laid bare in Jesus, in His words, in Himself, and in His disciples. To know Him is to know it.

Everywhere He deals with the world as a purposeful world, having a definite and discoverable meaning. It is not a dream, an illusion. It is a real world, with real men in it, and a real purpose. Intelligence orders human life. Design is stamped on all things.[2] Blind chance does not exist. The world is the execution of a plan, a set of mysterious and gigantic processes for realising a great purpose. That purpose, as it lay in the consciousness of Jesus, and found expression in His teaching and action, appears in various forms.

Listening to the beatitudes of the happy Christ, and weighing their meaning, we feel sure that we cannot be wrong in declaring that the final pur-

[1] "In the Christian Religion Jesus Christ is the standard in the view of the world, and the judgment of themselves, which marks believers, 'and accordingly' in dogmatics His person must be taken into account as the standpoint of knowledge, from which the limits of every doctrine are regarded."—Ritschl's "Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung," iii. pp. 3, 4.

[2] Sir Oliver Lodge's "Matter and Life," p. 54. et seq.

pose of the world, as He understood it, was and is, "supreme blessedness." Without ignoring the terrible power of evil—nay, more—when distinctly recognising its presence, and making war upon it, He speaks as though man was born to deep content, to sweet peace, to the rest of truth, the joy of service, and the blessedness of the vision of, and communion with, God.

Or go further in the same sermon, and hear the advice: "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"; and if you translate it, in the light of the whole sermon, it will mean love as God loves, as impartially, magnanimously, and self-denyingly, and you will be blessed as God is; one with Him in love, you will be one with Him in joy.

> "For life, with all it yields of joy and woe and hope and fear,
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been, indeed, and is;
> And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
> Such prize, despite the envy of the world,
> And, having gained truth, keep truth, that is all!"

Or, opening the Gospel of John, what is the meaning of that "life" of which Jesus speaks so often, the "life eternal"? and concerning which we read: "God so loved the world, that He gave

His only-begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." And again : "This is life eternal, to know Thee, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" ; and once more, "I am come that you may have life, and that you may have it abundantly." Whatever form it takes, and in whatever way it is expressed, it assumes or asserts, that the world aim is blessedness through oneness with God, harmony with the Eternal Will, conformity to the character of the Father, union and communion with God ; or, as Paul phrases it, being "reconciled" to Him ; so that we think as He thinks, feel as He feels, will as He wills, love as He loves, do as He does, and become one with Him in aim and act and character.

Or expressing the same aim in the thought-form of Paul, it is that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus. That is the world aim as Paul sees it ; and what is that but the same purpose expressed in a concrete personality and embodied in an actual experience. He is the Blessed One. Supreme blessedness is realized in Him. Never on earth was happier being. We have called Him a "Man of Sorrows" until we

have lost sight of His radiant joy ; and spoken of His "acquaintance with grief" as though He had not sounded the depths of blessedness. "Jesus was happy. People liked to be near Him. The breath of His personality drew men and women and little children to His side. People who could not follow Him went away sorrowful. He spoke to men of happiness. His whole idea was to make everybody happy. Unhappiness was the only thing that made Him sad. He wept over Jerusalem because it refused to be comforted ; He wept at Bethany for the unhappiness of Mary and Martha. His indignation against the religion of His period, was the same as His indignation against the sin of the world, they both made men and women unhappy. We are told twice of His tears ; His smiles were too frequent for recording."[3] Hence a world of Christs would be a world of the blessed. Did He not say, "These words have I spoken unto you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." That was His aim ; and it was

[3] "The Happy Christ," by Harold Begbie, pp. 37-38, Skeffington & Son.

His achievement for Himself, and it is what we are redeemed and trained for, viz., to be like Him in character and therefore in blessedness. For He is the synthesis of all the qualities that form a complete manhood. He is love as God is love, light as God is light, life as God is life, and blessedness as God is blessedness, and the meaning and aim of life is to make us partakers of His nature, of His character, and so of His supreme blessedness.

It would have been strange if other religions had not caught sight of this supreme purpose in the troubled life of man. They have. They read the pages of the Book of Life, if not clearly, yet so as to find a sustaining hope and an inspiring outlook. True, some religions have fallen into pessimism, one of the worst sins a religion can commit. But the majority of religions have had their "Paradise Regained" as well as "Paradise Lost." They have seen the Elysian fields, and feasted on visions of abounding delight. Confucius "thought of and believed in heaven as a happy Kingdom, with laws administered by saints and sages." The Roman Stoic had his ideal man dowered with an ideal goodness and possessed

of intrinsic worth. The religion of Moses ascended to its loftiest inspiration in the man who sang of the Eternal God, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness." But the revelation of Jesus transcends all racial limitations and divisions. It is a world aim, embracing at once the East and the West, essentially spiritual and ethical, the least local and occasional, at once the most catholic and human, the most personal and divine. It is the widest view which the mind can take of things in its effort to grasp them as an ordered whole; it embraces all the phenomena of society, of the total assemblage of men; of the spirit of the whole—a spirit of inward righteousness and magnanimous love of men, of sons of God, of frank and cordial forgiveness, of freedom from fret and worry, of kindly consideration, of pure character, of exhaustless joy, and of reciprocal service.

(2) And now what are the world processes by which this world aim is being realized?

(*a*) First, Jesus Himself claims to have a redemptive mission for man as man. He is the "Son of Man." Even if He had not used the expression, we should have been forced to apply it

to Him, if we were just to His spirit, and true to His ideals and achievements. He is the epitome of humanity. All men may find themselves in Him, and all of themselves, except their sin. To men who had the highest conception of God then known, He seemed likest God: in fact, so like God, that they felt He came straight from His presence, derived His being from Him; might stand, did stand, in their thought for Him; yet He was so really human, that they could trust Him in everything, and follow Him anywhere as God, not only without lowering, but positively ennobling, the thought of Deity, and whilst humanizing God, yet making God more divine. He is the "Son of Man" sent to seek and save that which is lost; sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but also to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well; to the Greeks at Jerusalem in quest of a Saviour, and likewise to the people of the uttermost parts of the earth. "In Him is life, and the life is the light of men." John's preface to his Gospel grows out of John's Christ; and in every clause of it is sustained by His words and deeds.[4] It could not be anything else if it

[4] "If it is said that the mystery of salvation was hid from eternity in God, who created the universe, it is indicated by

were true to Him ; and that preface places Him at the beginning and in the full stream of the world's life, shows Him coming forth from the Father, and by revealing Him, giving light to every man coming into the world. His disciples saw the breadth and fulness of His work. "God was in Christ," said the boldest thinker amongst them, in the greatest sentence of his writings, "reconciling the *world* unto Himself," and again, "For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth or things in the heaven."[5] So under the leadership of Christ, the universe and all that is in it, is made to fit into, and contribute to the realization of the end of God for the individual and the race.

this characteristic of God, that the purpose of salvation is connected in the closest way with the plan of the world, which began to be realised in creation; and that purpose, having been formed by the Creator before the creation of the world, was regulative even in its creation." "Biblical Theology of the New Testament," B. Weiss, ii., pp. 97—100. (Eng. trans.).

[5] See Note Page 225.

(*b*) Thus Jesus takes His historic place in the evolution of Religion, appears in the fulness of the times, at the predestined moment for His ministry, not to destroy aught that is good, but to develope, re-construct, create and inspire. The law came *by* Moses, but it came from God, as did the redeeming grace and the living reality Jesus brought: the men of the past said this and that as to its meaning and purpose, He had a higher interpretation to impart, not by way of extinguishing the law and the prophets; but rather by way of putting a new meaning into the old counsels, and giving them a more inward and spiritual scope, and so realizing their ideal and carrying them to their true goal. He belongs to the past, illumines it, frees it from the obsolete and outward, gathers up its treasures of truth, and incorporates them with His message. He does not make a breach in the continuity of the world's religious life; He deepens and widens the channels along which it flows, cleanses the waters, and enlarges their volume.

(*c*) But the chief distinction is that He brings man himself, as a new man, into unison with this aim, so that he adopts it as his own, and works

for it as for his chief good. He shows him that as a child he belongs to the "kingdom of God," and is one with the benignant and gracious activities of His spirit; and that as a man he must put that kingdom and the righteousness which is its goal and law, before everything else; that sin and evil are not his masters, but are to be mastered, and may be mastered since He was manifested to destroy them and all their works; and that the delivered man must breathe His spirit of self-sacrifice and benevolence, of pure altruism and brotherhood, and die to "himself," so that he may live the larger life of God. Thus He brings man, the individual, over as a free personality, to the adoption of the purpose of God as his absorbing business, and henceforth all his energies are dedicated to its realization.

(*d*) Nor is the world of human experience with all its confusions and contradictions, its failures and victories, its sins and sorrows, cut off from this aim. The life of Jesus is the supreme demonstration of the saying of Paul, "all things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to this divine purpose." It shows that they cannot fail in the

end, though they may be defeated on the way; that they are invincible, even though they are beaten back and crucified. The world is made for righteousness, and for blessedness, through righteousness; and it must become that for which it was made, "though a wide compass first be fetched." The all-holy is the all-mighty. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord; not tribulation or anguish, not persecution or famine, not peril or sword, not death or life, not angels or principalities; nothing! The counsel of the Lord stands fast, and His thought endures from generation to generation.

(*e*) Even nature, in the thought of Christ, does not stand aloof, but also brings its aid, for it is written over and over with purpose,[6] and is contributory, and not antagonistic to the carry-out of the world plan. Jesus treats nature as a mirror of God. It reveals His face. It is full of the stuff of ideas about Him; about man, and about life. The lilies declare His love of beauty, the green grass speaks of His over-flowing energy, and the sparrows of His pitiful care. Behind all, above all, and through all, is the Father of all,

[6] See Note Page 225.

the One who makes all things one. "The laws of nature," what are they but the "habits of God," said Joseph Cook. "God geometrises" declared Plato; and he saw the diagrams and plans, sketches and ideas of God all around him. Jesus said, God teaches His child by this wonderful symbolism. All things are the unfolding of God; the sun shines on the evil and the good, and proclaims His generosity; the rain descends on the just and the unjust, and shows His impartiality. Nature is altruistic. It is built on the pattern of the Cross. It has the redemptive ideas running through its life—sacrifice, brotherhood, purification, serenity, progress. Jesus Himself is the beginning, the principle of the creation of God,[7] and that creation is one of the divinely appointed ministers to the well-being of man. Jesus is the solution of the riddle of the world, of the riddle of God and man.

(3) But does not all this assume a slow and measured approach to that "one divine event towards which the whole creation moves," and is not that slowness and measured step out of

[7] "Rev. iii., 14. Westcott on the Gospel of Creation, in St. John; Dorner, "The Person of Christ," iii., 361—369, i., 316.

keeping with the ideas of Jesus ?

It must be recognized that, of late, the tendency has been very strong to exaggerate the importance of those elements in the teaching of Jesus which refer to the future, and to figure Him as one who looked for surprising catastrophes, and terrific convulsions. But this is not fair to the sources. No doubt He saw, as John the Baptist did, the sword of Damocles hanging by its thread over the head of offending Israel. It could not be hidden from view ; and in His forecasts of the future Jesus naturally and wisely mixed His colours from the pigments of the time ; and set the fate of Jerusalem in the foreground of the events incidental to the development of the kingdom of God. But that fate, though dominant in His teaching, was incidental to his broader representations of the gradual but sure advance of the reign of the Spirit of Christ throughout the world and throughout the ages. Does He not say, The seed of the kingdom is small, but it grows into a tree, and it will grow till its branches fill the earth ? It is a "little leaven" hidden in the mass of meal, but it leavens the whole lump. It is an edifice to be built up by the moral acts of men.

There are catastrophes, but they are part of the progress; there are changes, far-reaching and immense, but they are precedent to advance, they are the consuming fires by which God makes room for building His wider and roomier mansions.

"Jesus is," says Edward Caird, "the greatest optimist whom the world has ever seen." He knows no despair. He sees of the travail of His soul; but He knows He will be satisfied. It is not chaos to which He is going, but an ordered and peaceful world. Grim tragedy is here, the clash and rattle of war, but the issue is never in doubt. He knows, and His followers know, that they go through a world that is always overwhelmingly against them, but they march with an irrepressible optimism like His own, conscious of a common conquering life, and of the victory of their transcendental ideal. God in Christ becomes God and Saviour of all men, and of all nations. The whole process of finite existence, the entire scheme of things, is one connected evolution, in which God manifests Himself in, and to, His creatures, that in the fulness of time He may reconcile all things to Himself.

V.

And now let us ask what is the attitude of the modern mind towards this solution of the problem? Does it move with it, or towards it, or against it?

I admit that we are not immediately concerned with it as philosophy; and that its religious value is as obvious as it is immeasurable; but as reasoning men we cannot be indifferent to its philosophical soundness as an interpretation of the universe. "When Isaac Casaubon was being shown over the Sorbonne, his guide took him into its great hall, and said, with a visible expectation of admiring awe, "This is the hall in which the theologians have disputed for a thousand years." "Indeed," said Casaubon, "and pray, what have they settled?"

That is the sceptical temper with which some Christians approach the philosophers. But it is not ours. Christianity is the revelation of the essence of God; and Ritschl is right when he declares that, "If theoretical thought is ever to solve the problem of the world as a whole, it will have to fall back on the Christian view of God, of the world, and of human destiny." That I cannot doubt, for Truth is one, and the goal of

unity of thought must be reached.

Is modern thought adopting the Christian view ? I have no hesitation in saying that it is ; and, at this moment of intellectual freedom and daring, more steadily and strongly than at any other period in the history of thought. It is becoming more and more habitual to think of the whole creation as at once the self-limitation, but still the self-expression of God ; "its end and purpose," the realization of the "good" whose manifestation culminates in Jesus Christ.

(1) It is increasingly taught that the world is full of purpose. Sir Oliver Lodge says, "Matter possesses energy in the form of persistent motion, and it is propelled by force ; but neither matter nor energy possesses the power of automatic guidance and control." "Energy has no directing power" ; but guidance and intelligent control run through the universe, and are incorporated, not only with human, but with even material things. "Matter is the instrument and vehicle of the mind ; incarnation is the mode by which mind interacts with the present scheme of things, and thereby the element of guidance is supplied" ; but though a vehicle of mind, "it is dominated

and transcended by it." [8] And to this may be added the verdict of Dr. Edward Caird, based on different data. "This long, unhasting, unresisting process of the evolution of religion is itself the best evidence we can have that there is a divine meaning in the world, and that mankind have not laid the sacrifice of their efforts and their thoughts, their prayers and their tears, upon the altar of an unknown or unknowable God." Dr. Stirling reminds us, that Hume must be regarded as representing his own deliberate opinion when a character in one of his dialogues pronounces, "the whole frame of nature, with its unity of plan and nice adjustment of parts, to be the work of an intelligent author."

In the quotation given above, Sir Oliver Lodge, a leading biologist, is criticising Hæckel, perhaps the foremost biologist of Germany. Hæckel, with overflowing literary energy, but with slender philosophic equipment, contends that the scientific view of the world is utterly inconsistent with the exposition given by the Christian Religion. But it is a significant fact that not only Sir Oliver Lodge, but the philosophico-

[8] See Note Page 226.

scientific world generally, separates itself from Hæckel's anti-Christian conclusions with surprising unanimity. Paulsen, writing in 1900, says of Hæckel's "Riddle of the Universe," "I have read this book with burning shame, with shame for the condition of general and philosophic culture of our people. That such a book should be possible, that it could be written, printed, bought, read, admired, believed by a nation that possesses a Kant, a Gœthe, a Schopenhauer, is painful indeed." In short, the science and philosophy of the age move with ever-increasing momentum towards the acceptance of the world-view of the Christianity of Jesus Christ.[9]

(2) As to what that meaning is, there is not the same clearness and strength of conviction; but there is a growing consensus of opinion that it cannot be anything less than "good"—"good" for the individual and for the whole race of man. The power that is behind all and in all "makes for righteousness," though it is with hesitating strides, and sometimes with what seem to be backward movements. In spite of all the materialism and levity and self-will of our day,

[9] See Note Pages 226, 227.

never did men feel more than now that we are under a reign of law, and that the law involves intelligence, an intelligence of tremendous strength and character that must centre in personality, and in a personality righteous and benevolent. R. L. Stevenson says, "the intention of the universe seems to be kind." Browning sings—

> "This world's no blot for us nor blank;
> It means intensely, and means good;
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

Philosophy, science, and poetry together are corroborating this, making clear that there is an evolution according to law sustained through vast cycles of ages and over enormous and almost incalculable spaces, justifying the lines of James Thomson—

> "From seeming evil,
> Still educing good, and better thence again,
> And better still, in infinite progression."

Or that finer song of the poet, who so often put into inspiring strains the philosophy and science of his day :—

> "Love is and was my Lord and King,
> And in his presence I attend
> To hear the tidings of my friend,
> Which every hour his couriers bring.

" Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

" And hear at times a sentinel,
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
" In the deep night, that all is well." [10]

Tolstoi speaks for a growing number in Russia, saying: " When I once really entered into the life of humanity, I became convinced that despair cannot be the destiny of man, and that people have lived, and are living now, by faith. I saw around me people who, having this faith, derived from it an idea of life that gave them strength to live and strength to die in peace and joy."

No doubt there is another company of the prophets of literature who strike an entirely different note. They assume, where they do not assert, the falseness of the Christian view, deny that life yields an immense surplus of joy, that men are in the hands of an Infinite Love, and that the disciplines of every day make for robust character and social well-being. They are the apostles of pessimism, the messengers of the gospel of despair. Ibsen sets it forth in his dramas to

[10] In Memoriam, cxxv.

the Norwegians. Thomas Hardy and Grant Allen present it in their tales to the British. In Germany it is the harsh voice of Nietzsche bidding men "Curse God, and die." They talk of the "Superman," strong, ruthless, independent of morality, deficient of altruism, and vehemently individualistic. It is a literary movement only. It is "in the air." It has no philosophic or scientific basis. It contradicts history. It belittles the present, and it denies the future. The modern mind, broadly speaking, regards it as abnormal, and after listening to its painful dirge, passes on to the sunnier heights of reason, science, faith and hope.

(3) Nor can it be denied that it is in this interpretation of the "scheme of things" the Christian Religion has lived and worked for centuries; and by its life and work it has justified the faith men have placed in it as a true and sufficient expression of the meaning of the universe. "The spiritual experience of Christian men, their thoughts, feelings, hopes, and strivings, above all, the faith which includes them all, is a fact which cannot be dismissed or made to take a second place in any true investigation of the

meaning of the world."[11] That experience is here. It is centuries old, and yet it is stronger than ever; and its spiritual interpretation of the constitution and purpose of the universe holds the field of actual life, sustained by a body of apologetic facts which is its triumphant and irrefutable vindication. The saying of Dr. Caird is worthy of all acceptation: "The religious experience of the world, is in point of view, the philosophy of religion ready-made. . . . To follow intelligently the movement of human thought concerning God and divine things which the successive positive religions represent is to find the philosophy of religion prepared to our hands."[12]

I do not hesitate to say, therefore, in full view of the whole of the data, that modern thought is gravitating with increasing sureness of foot and clearness of vision towards that solution of the problem of the "scheme of things" which centres in Christ Jesus our Lord.[13]

[11] "The Fatherhood of God," by J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., p. 10. For a remarkably able and scholarly discussion of this subject in its philosophical and theological bearings, see "Theology and Truth," by Newton H. Marshall, M.A., Ph.D. James Clarke & Co., 1906.

[12] "Philosophy of Religion." p, 310.

[13] See Note Page 227.

NOTE 5. PAGE 210.

DR. LIGHTFOOT ON COLOSSIANS I., 16.

"All things must find their meeting-point, their reconciliation, at length in Him from whom they took their rise—in the Word as mediatorial agent, and through the Word in the Father as the primary source. . . . This ultimate goal of the present dispensation in time is similarly stated in several passages. Sometimes it is represented as the birth-throe and deliverance of all creation through Christ—as Rom. vii., 19, et seq. Sometimes it is the absolute and final subjection of universal nature to Him—as 1 Cor., xv., 28. Sometimes it is the reconciliation of all things through Him—as Col. i., 20. sometimes it is the recapitulation, the gathering up in one head, of the universe in Him—as Eph. i., 10. The image involved in this last passage best illustrates the particular expression in the text; but all alike ennunciate the same truth in different terms. The Eternal Word is the goal of the universe, as He was the starting-point. It must end in unity, as it proceeded from unity; and the centre of this unity is Christ." Bishop Lightfoot, in Colossians i., 16.

NOTE 6. PAGE 213.

PURPOSE IN NATURE.

"Dr. Greville Macdonald's "The Religious Sense in its Scientific Aspect," p. 104. "When we know that the protoplasmic folk who spin, though lacking wheels, and weave, though wanting looms, without inter-communication or moving from the place where each is chained—when, I say, we understand that each lays down his microscopical length of thread in the precise manner needed and designed by the idea of the whole, formulated by the will of the Law governing the life of each working cell, we are silent in deep worship of this eternal, ever revealing Law, in whose service we men and women are also enlisted. We hardly then dare exclaim, "How beautiful"! but fall silently on our knees as if in tacit prayer to the Unknown for some closer touch with its infinite life."

NOTE 8. PAGE 219.

PERSONAL GUIDANCE IN NATURE.

"My contention then is—and in this contention I am practically speaking for my brother physicists—that whereas life or mind can neither generate energy nor directly exert force, yet it can cause matter to exert force on matter, and so can exercise guidance and control; it can so prepare any scene of activity, by arranging the position of existing material, and timing the liberation of existing energy, as to produce results concordant with an idea or scheme or intention; it can, in short, 'aim' and 'fire.'" Sir Oliver Lodge, "Life and matter," p. 164.

NOTE 9. PAGE 220.

GOD IN NATURE AND LIFE.

From many illustrations I add the words of McConnel: "It is little less than marvellous the way in which the words of Jesus fit in with the forms of thought which are to-day current. They are life, generation, survival of the fit, perishing of the unfit, tree and fruit, multiplication by cell growth as yeast, operation by chemical contact as salt, dying of the lonely seed to produce much fruit, imposition of a higher form of life upon a lower by being born from above, grafting of a new scion upon a wild stock, the phenomena of plant growth from the seed through the blade, the ear, and the matured grain, and, finally, the attainment of an individual life which has an eternal quality." "The Evolution of Immortality," p. 135.

Lord Kelvin wrote in a letter to *The Times*, of May 4, 1903: "Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power. Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers which we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, 'No, no more than I could believe that a book of

botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.'"

And in a speech at University College in the same month, he said: "They only knew God in His works, but they were absolutely forced by science to admit and believe with absolute confidence in a directive power—in an influence other than physical, dynamical, electrical forces. There was nothing between absolute scientific belief in creative power and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Was there anything so absurd as to believe that a number of atoms by falling together of their own accord could make a crystal, a sprig of moss, a microbe, a living animal? They had a spiritual influence, and in science a knowledge that there was that influence in the world around them. They could be free in their thought, in their criticisms; and with freedom of thought they were bound to come to the conclusion that science was not antagonistic to religion, but a help for religion."

Note 13. Page 224.

THE SCHEME OF THINGS.

"But indeed with the passing years, the decay of strength, the loss of my old active pleasant habits, there grows more and more upon me that belief in the goodness of this scheme of things, and the goodness of our veiled God, which is an excellent and pacifying compensation." Robert Louis Stevenson.

LECTURE VI.

The Christian Conception of God.

In our last lecture we found that the solution offered, by the Founder of the Christian Religion, of the supreme problem of the constitution of the world—of its aim, and of the means and agents for the realisation of that aim, is the one that goes farthest in explaining and vindicating the facts of the universe, in satisfying the cravings of the human heart, in meeting the demands of the conscience, and that also receives the fullest confirmation from the researches and reasonings of the modern mind.

But it must have been manifest that the Christian conception of the universe depends, from first to last, upon the answers given to the question, "*Who* is God," "*What* is His character," "What are His purposes concerning us?" "What is His disposition, and what are His relations towards us and all men?" Everything

turns upon the replies of Jesus to these enquiries.

For "the scheme of things" cannot be completely understood apart from God. He is the centre and soul of the universe, as well as its Creator, immanent in all its parts as well as its beating heart, and, therefore, of the true world-view, He must be the all-radiant Sun. The unity of the whole world of nature and spirit, of the facts of its long and wide-ranging history, is in Him; and decisive and momentous as is the explication offered by the Christian Religion of this mysterious universe, yet this is because of the critical and fundamental character of its conception of God. If that fails, all fails. If Christianity succeeds here, it is victorious over the whole field; for, in the end of the day, it is the content of this supreme term, "God" in Religion, which fixes its rank amongst religions; determines its intellectual and moral values to men, and offers the material for forecasting its fate in the long and varying experience of the race.

The religion that does not give an adequate and satisfying conception of God is destined to give place to that religion which yields the fullest satisfaction to the quickened and illumined con-

science, as well as the most complete solace for the sorrows of mankind. In the last resort, the worth of a religion depends upon the *truth* of its conception of God : because, even if we say with the Ritschlian School, that the chief phrase by which the Religion of Christ is to be understood is the "Kingdom of God," we still have to ask what is the content of the word "God" ? and if with Kaftan we take as primary, the conception of Christ as being the supreme agent for realising "the Kingdom of God" on earth, with its order of righteousness ; once more, we get back to the same inquiry, for "God was in Christ" realizing the Kingdom ; and, therefore, we must needs ask again, "*Who* is God ; *what* did the word 'God' mean to Jesus, or *How* did Jesus think of God ?"

II.

Now it is on this very subject that Jesus claims to speak with an entirely unique knowledge, based on a special personal experience.

"No one," He says on an occasion of deepest significance to Himself, and His fortunes as a religious Teacher, "No one knows the Father save the Son" ; so that John the evangelist is only summarising the results of his observation

of the consciousness of Jesus, and fixing them in their true place in the evolution of Religion, when he says in the prologue to his Gospel, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Jesus comes with His illumining intimacies, from those sacred recesses in the Infinite Father, and expounds God. He tells at *first* hand what God *is*. He comes from the Eternal presence and repeats His thoughts and deeds. "I do," He says, "always those things that are pleasing to Him; I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father hath taught Me, I speak." His messages are straight from the lips of the Father, His deeds are the outflow of the divine energy. Again and again He contrasts Himself with the opposing Jews, and attributes their blindness to truth, and their hatred of Himself, to their want of knowledge of God.[1] He proceeds, on the ground that He is the Son of the Father, and knows Him intimately, in exposing their false judgments, and in authoritatively showing them the way of truth and life; always basing

[1] Cf. Matt. xi. 27. Luke x. 21. John i. 18; vi. 44-46; vii. 28; vii. 55; x. 15.

His claim to unique knowledge upon His special filial consciousness, His personal experience of the Fatherhood of God. "His unerring moral and religious perceptions," says Martineau, "were of the nature of divine memories: He did only the things which He had seen and heard of His Father; His life and mind was the transcript and visage of God, so that he who had seen Him had seen the Father also." "That deep yearning after the infinite source of holiness and truth of which Jesus was profoundly conscious, seemed to imply that He had once seen that perfect Being, and been a tenant within the Divine Nature"; so that He is not so much one of "the mighty spirits of our race" who "are as the lyric thoughts of God that drop and breathe from His almighty solitude," as He is "the one only finished expression of His mind, the one entire symmetric strain," that "has fallen upon the world. In Christ we have the over-flowing Word, the deep and beautiful soliloquy of the Most High." "Not more certainly do we discern in the writings of Shakespeare the greatest manifestation of human genius than in the reality of Christ the highest expression of the Divine. The mind of Jesus

reveals the perfect thought and inmost love of the All-ruling God. Were He the only born, the solitary self-revelation of the Creative Spirit, He could not more purely open the mind of Heaven ; being the very Logos, the apprehensible nature of God, which long unuttered of the world, and abiding in the beginning with Him, has now come forth, and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth." [2]

III.

This claim is based upon experience : "God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus is the Son of God. The designation is not a metaphor. It is a fact of experience. It is not a florid expression, adapted from the Hebrew writings, but an accurate description of reality. The divine fact of the Fatherhood of God, and all it means, is first revealed in the filial consciousness of Jesus. He is the Son of the Father, and the word Father, as applied to God, becomes the "master-word" of His experience, the key to His expositions of life and duty, the charm of His sweetest parables, the "open sesame" to every

[2] "Endeavours after the Christian Life," J. Martineau, D.D., pp. 507-8. Sixth Edition.

portal of the temple of His thought, "the true philosopher's stone which transmutes all the base metal of humanity into gold." It is the soul of His Gospel, and the Gospel of the Gospels. To the penitent it means forgiveness; to the wounded a healing balm; to the captive, deliverance; to the defeated, courage; to the lost, salvation. It is the magic word of the life of Christ. His moral miracles are all in it; His heroism and self-abnegation; His matchless humility and exhaustless patience; His great "nevertheless," and His "Rejoice ye," all come from this perennial fount.

You meet with it at the very dawn of His thought. As soon as the records have anything to tell us about Him, they report that, although He is only a lad, yet the fact of Sonship to God has already shaped His ideas of duty, and how early it began its moulding work on this plastic nature in that Nazareth home we do not know; but certain it is that that realization supplies Him with a justifiable excuse for acting according to His own thought and in independence of His father and mother, when He stays behind at Jerusalem, for He says, "Do you not know that I must put first the things which concern My Father, the things

that belong to His house and His business?" Already His young spirit has seized this idea, entered into its wealth, and felt its sovereignty over His soul.

And when, eighteen years later, He publicly dedicates Himself to His redeeming and revolutionary ministry, there comes the voice from heaven, attesting the long-continued communion between Him and His Father, in the message, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It is the Divine response to His habitual thought of God as His Father. It is His strong inspiration, as refreshed and strengthened, He goes forward to the perils of His new task of reforming and completing the Hebrew Religion.

Do His disciples ask Him to teach them how to pray? The answer comes: "When ye pray, say 'Father.'" Could anything be more simple, home-like, or natural, and, on the lips of Jesus, more inevitable? It is as clear as a ray of light straight from the sun, and as simple and direct as the talk of a mother with her child. There is no hint of the schools, no suggestion of philosophical reflection, nothing about the Infinite, the Almighty, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient. There is no suggestion of the learned Rabbi speaking to an

interested and enquiring audience. It is a revolution in its silence, as it is a revelation in its speech. It is the language of the nursery and of the fire-side, with all their homeliness and natural charm, at once the perfection of simplicity and of beauty, with no hint of a problem to be solved and an intellect to be taxed; but only the need of a trusting heart, unfearing courage, and clinging love. "When ye pray, say 'Father.'"

Are the Pharisees, in their cold intellectualism, arrayed against Him? Does the blight of defeat fall upon His labour? It is so; but hear Him talking to the Father "at that time," when the wreckage of His toil is all around Him, and note the unruffled composure with which He says, "Though the wise and clever refuse My proffered wisdom with scorn, and have no welcome for the teaching Thou hast given Me, yet Thou hast revealed its truth to simple souls, gifted with the genius of childlike humility;" thus He flings Himself on the loving care of God, adding: "Even so, Father; it is Thy way, Thy wise and good way, and I thank Thee for it."

Do the "seventy" messengers come back from their pilgrimage of philanthropy, exulting over

their marvellous successes ? He rejoices in spirit, and offers thanksgiving to His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, as He hears of the fulfilment of His purpose, the carrying out of His great work.

He is challenged as to the orthodoxy of His beneficence. The deed is right, but the day is wrong. He has healed a poor paralytic on the Sabbath. The critics attack Him forthwith, and condemn Him, not only as disloyal to the law as they read it, but to God Himself, the Law-giver, and at once He betakes Himself to His high tower in the holy Fatherhood, and from that centre of infinite calm exclaims, "My Father works straight on through all the days He does not cease because a new morn has dawned. His arm is not shortened by a false notion of sacredness, but He links the days together in a bond of perfect sanctity by the magnanimity of His generosity, and therefore I work on, not ceasing to relieve suffering because this day chances to be the seventh, rather than the sixth or the fourth, of the week."

And when the last hour is at hand, and He is to face Gethsemane and Calvary, shaken through

and through with paroxysms of anguish, flung to the earth by stabs of pain, then the founts of power are opened in this revelation, and He cries, "Father, what shall I say? Save Me from this hour?" Never! For this very suffering for others I came. Let all be as Thou wilt. "Not My will, but Thine be done." And reinforced by that fresh grasp of the hand of His Father, He bears right onward, enduring the torture of the Cross, despising its shame and rejoicing in the far-spreading benefits of His sacrifice thereon.

So in mass and volume this experience of Sonship to the Father is the essential soul of the life of Jesus.

IV.

But not only is this idea of God as His Father distinct and primary in the experience of Jesus, it is *dominant* all the way through His teaching and working.

He has inherited certain conceptions of God from His predecessors, and received others from His contemporaries. He is a student of the Old Testament, familiar with its prophecies and psalms. He has listened to the instructions of His mother,

and to the speeches and readings of the wise men in the synagogue, and He is dowered with a wealth of Hebrew teaching. But all the conceptions of God which He inherits from the past or hears from the men of His day are merged, cleansed, transformed, and transfigured, and come forth modified by this supreme idea of God, the Father.

To Him the current Semitic aloofness of God is intolerable. It is the chief factor in the reigning religion. Deep and sheer down is the gulf between God and man. Finite existence is beneath His concern. The fact of facts is the transcendence of God. To Jesus God is "nearer than breathing, closer than hands or feet"; the one reality, clear, living, present, and active above all others. He is not as the Jews of His day thought—a distant deity, infinitely remote from the sorrows and cares of man, a transcendental majesty, unapproachable without propitiatory sacrifice, and unconcerned with the struggles and woes of the world; a possible visitor in some far-off morrow of the history of Israel, but not nigh at hand to redeem and save now. No! He is a Father in His own home

and amongst His own children, caring for them more than for the grass, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven ; more than for the lilies that make the fields ablaze with their beauty, or for the birds that do not fall to the ground without His knowledge.

He still holds the faith of Abraham expressed in the words, "I am the Lord God Almighty ; walk thou before Me, and be perfect." Like the patriarch, He thought of the overwhelming majesty of the Divine Being, the irresistible sovereignty of the power that makes for righteousness ; but He conceived and represented the almightiness as that of a Father, not of a Jupiter, or a Zeus. It is power, but power clad in the garb of gentleness, musical with the tenderness of gracious welcome, made magnetic by forgiving love, working to uplift the fallen, woo the rebellious, and save the lost. There is none of the wild tyranny of strength, none of the brute pagan Krishnu, that crushes and destroys. The might of God soothes and heals. It loses all the repulsiveness of Moloch, and carries the grace and winsomeness of an irresistible affection. It is an inspiration to faith, not fear ; to heroism,

not to cringing terror. Speaking from the depths of His own experience, He says : "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear. Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say to you, fear Him." So He goads His followers to courageous and death-daring service by the conception of the almightiness of the Father, or encourages them by the assurance that it is the Father's delight to give them the kingdom. Thus He takes up that revelation of the all-sufficiency of God for Abraham and his seed, fills it with solace and inspiration, and broadens it out in the light of His own experience as Son of God and Son of Man, to the widest ranges of the human family.

Amongst the stock ideas of His day, the most influential conception of God gathered about Moses and the "Covenant" ; and this must have been basic to very much of the early thinking of Jesus. God was revealed as the "I am that I am," the one stable and steadfast Being amid all the flux and change of the life of the world, the one independent and absolute Being, committed

to the defence and guardianship of the covenant people, faithful, on His part, to His word, and binding them, on their part, to be true to their duty, contracting with them for obedience and offering them reward, denouncing disobedience and threatening penalty. Jesus knew the God of Sinai and Horeb, and declared that God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him. He saw the Eternal as Father, and therefore His independence was without aloofness, His immutability without hardness, His fixed order without stagnation, His steadfast maintenance of His original covenant without exclusiveness.

Again, is it not certain that the one hundred and third Psalm would have a special fascination for One who was so often moved to compassion for men? That deeply pathetic figure of a God of pity must have hung in the gallery of His imagination and often inspired His service. Those messages of pardon for men were as sweetest music to a soul delighting in the bestowal of mercy, always eager to forgive. But, rich as the revelation of the Psalm is, it could not content Him. It only says God is

like a Father, not that He IS, in the *essence of Him*, fatherly love and rule, fatherly sacrifice and grace. It celebrates the pity of the covenant God of Israel, not of the redeeming Father of humanity. Jesus, therefore, lifts it out of its tribal boundaries and racial limitations, and sets it in the broad stream of humanity, just as He takes it out of the realm of parable and simile, and assures us that "God is *essentially* the Father, *essentially* something infinitely more than knowledge and power," essentially more than pity for a chosen people, "essentially communicating and receiving a living affection, essentially all that the heart can desire." The social nature is of the very essence of the Eternal Being; the communication of His life and the reciprocation of His affection date from beyond time, belong to the very being of God.

But the chief treasure Jesus found in the Scriptures of His boyhood and youth was written in the prophecies of Isaiah and of Jeremiah. There He read of "the Holy One," the thrice "Holy," of "the Lord our Righteousness," of the cleansing fires of the Divine purity; and He took over definitely and decisively into His thought the idea of God as "Holy" and "Righteous."

It became part of the very substance of His thinking; and it found voice in the prayer that preceded the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as we are one." "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me, and I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

That is His last word in the naming of God; that is the supreme fact in Jesus' experiences of God. He is righteous; and He is righteous as Father. It blends stainless purity and atoning love; inflexible righteousness and forgiving grace; burning antagonism to evil, and overflowing compassion for man; passionate devotion to order, and suffering effort to heal the breaches made by disorder. It is the central and most comprehensive thought of God as Jesus knew Him; and He knew Him as no one else ever did.

See what it means.

(1) Jesus brings the fact of the Fatherhood of

God face to face with the hard and contradictory facts of life; of His own life of pain and contradiction; of failure and loss; face to face with the suffering caused by sin, as well as with the weakness due to the flesh. He does not ignore them. Far from it! He recognises them as no one else does; knows them, and feels all as no other has done—the sin, the rebellion against God, the break-up of the moral order of the world, the hells on earth. He faces all; and though He did no sin, yet He makes Himself a sin-offering, so that He may bring sin itself to an end and restore the moral order of God's universe. Never was there any sorrow like His sorrow; any agony so deep and full as His; and yet with the heavy cross on His breaking heart, He says, "*Holy* Father," "*Righteous* Father." The foul wrongs do not stain God. The incongruous and mysterious facts do not lead Jesus to question the Father's love or the perfection of the moral rule of God. As a Son, He is perfectly acquiescent in the will of the Father. In His final agony on the Cross, when it seemed as though the Father was silent towards Him, and would give Him no response, He still trusted and obeyed, without

doubting for one single moment either the Father's righteousness or the Father's love. God is hidden from His vision, and He is shuddering in the death-throes under the unspeakable load of His sufferings, yet He lovingly clings to the Father, clasps His hand with all His strength, and cries, "My God," for He *is* His, though He sees Him not; and in the strength of that assurance He drains the cup of anguish to its dregs, in complete obedience to the Eternal love and the Eternal holiness.

It is there, in these redeeming experiences, Jesus shows Himself the pattern Son of the Father, and attains to the full knowledge by which He gives, as His final and supreme name for God, "the Righteous Father." He suffers; suffers vicariously; suffers, not for His own sins, but for ours. "It pleases the Lord to bruise Him. He hath put Him to grief; He makes His soul an offering for sin; He is bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

We lose nothing by giving up the metaphor of universal sovereignty, borrowed from the Roman law and the Roman Empire, for the fact of

universal fatherhood revealed in Christ. For it is not a wrong idea of sin, or of punishment, that is given in the "fatherliness" of God. It is the acceptance of only half the truth about the Fatherhood of God that weakens the moral fibre of men, and generates a piety with some of the peace, but without the holy severity, of Jesus Christ.

> "God's truth is full-orbed; of half-truths beware,
> Half-truths are traitorous, however fair."

Jesus is the truth, the truth "full-orbed"; and He who has seen Him in His awful sternness towards sin, and indescribable sufferings to make an end of sin, as well as in His great pities, will see the sovereignty of holiness as an integral part of the sovereignty of love in the Fatherhood of God.

(2) Clearly, then, Jesus, out of His own experience as a Son of the Father, puts into His conception of God the fact of *Fatherhood:*

(*a*) Not only in the sense that our life is His creation, or

(*b*) That He has made us in His image, participators in His mental and moral qualities, in some measure, and, indeed, only a little lower than God; or

(*c*) That He is a ruling sovereign, clad with an authority that is more regal because it is paternal ; or

(*d*) That His is a patient, willing, forgiving, and watchful love ; but also that He is

(*e*) Holiness, or complete and absolute perfection of character ; and

(*f*) Righteousness, or the fixed will to maintain the right amongst men, even though it be at an infinite price.

Thus, God is the ideal Father.

The purest, holiest love is not that of a child for its parent. That love may have in it, and often has, an element of selfishness ; not that of a friend, nor that of husband and wife ; but that of the best mother and father for their own child. In its purest form, selfishness does not enter into that love. It is free from taint. It is divine. An ideal father or mother will both *endure*, and *inflict* any suffering that may be needful to secure the highest welfare of the child, that is, its "holiness," its "righteousness."

Now God is not only essentially Father ; but, in the thought of Christ, essentially the

Holy, the Righteous Father ; therefore, His holy love will delight in redeeming man from sin, be the cost to Himself, or to us, what it may. Sin must go. He will make an end of it ; He will suffer Himself, in His Son, on the Cross of vicarious suffering ; He will thrust us, if need be, into the hell of personal punishment. Dr. W. N. Clarke says : "God would not be holy, if He were not love. Love is an element in the perfect goodness ; that is to say, love is an element in holiness." . . . And again : "Love is a main element in the character which holiness requires Him to act out ; or, in other words, holiness requires God to act as love. The action of love is a part of the action of holiness."[3]

Thus, the Fatherhood of God, as Jesus knew it, felt it, conceived it, and revealed it, is love, original and underived, forgiving and educating, suffering and punishing, anticipating and preventing, communicating and drawing to its heart the sons of men. It was that to Jesus and for Jesus. For the Divine Fatherhood is first revealed in the life and death of this pattern Son, and the primary source of our knowledge is the conscious-

[3] "Outline of Christian Theology." pp. 99, 100.

ness of Jesus, a set of personally experienced facts in the soul of Him who lived in the bosom of the Father. Therefore, He does not take up the elements of the Hebrew faith in God, sift them, mingle them, and re-arrange them as a learned theologian might do with the "almightiness" affirmed by Abraham, the eternal independence affirmed by Moses, the kingship by David, the holiness by Isaiah, and the paternity by the latest Psalmist ; but, by the creative synthesis of His life, as the Son of Man and the Son of God, He produces a result entirely different from the sum of the elements and the attributes contained in the Old Testament—a result which is far higher and is distinctive of the very essence of the Religion of Christ. It is not a mechanical mixture of various materials of different ages and qualities ; it is a new and vital product generated by a new life. It is the creation of Jesus, and the eternal witness of His divinity as the Founder of a new Religion.

VI.

Passing now from the experience of Jesus to the witness of His disciples in the New Testament,

we are confronted by three facts concerning the Fatherhood of God.

(1) They assert the unique sonship of Jesus to the Father.

(2) They show that by faith in the Gospel men enter into and share the same relationship; and

(3) They set forth an essential and, therefore, a universal Fatherhood in God to all men.

(1) Paul and Peter speak of God as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." John identifies the name of God with that of "Father"; and uniformly describes Jesus as the Son of the Father. John's elect name for God is "the Father," and it displaces every other. "God is love," the love of the ideal Father; "God is life"; and the life was manifested in the self-sacrificing love of the Son of the Father. "God," says the writer to the Hebrews, "hath at the end of the age spoken to us by His Son." Everywhere we meet with these utterances of the early Christian faith. The echoes of the distinctive teaching and unique experience of Jesus as the Son of the Father are heard throughout this literature. The

first Christians could have taken to their lips the words of the poet—

> "So to our mortal eyes subdued,
> Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
> We know in Thee the Fatherhood
> And heart of God revealed." [4]

(2) It is in the expression of their own sense of sonship to God that they overflow with joy. "They are all sons of God through faith which is in Christ Jesus." "They are sons of God" and "joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Already they know something of the glorious freedom of sons. They have an immediate certainty of the exalted relationship as a fact; a deep and exultant satisfaction of soul; a sense of enlarged capacity; a joy in God, in the thought of Him as Father, and in communion with Him as sons. They have the witness of the Spirit attesting the divine relationship, and, therefore, they endure heroically as already more than conquerors; though they wait for the full "revealing" of the privileges and honours of the sons of God. It is the spring of their heroism, the fount of their patience, and the source of their invincible hope. They have passed from death unto life. They have a direct

[4] Whittier's "Our Master."

and personal experience of the forgiveness of sins, of acceptance with God through the beloved ; they are sure of God, sure of His mercy and love ; of His all-sufficing help, of His uplifting inspirations ; therefore they are filled with exuberant joy ; their peace flows as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea. They "call on God as Father," and pass the time of their pilgrimage with awe, seeking to be partakers of His holiness. They do not dread the future, for they know it is the Father's purpose "to bring many sons to glory through Jesus Christ." They repeat the experience of Jesus ; His peace, His deep content with the Father's will, His exultant joy in the Father's increasing glory.

In fact, the New Testament is the literature of the children of God. It is the book of the family of believers. It tells the story of the household of faith, their trials and joys, their fears and hopes, their faults and virtues, their abounding zeal, their passion for self-sacrifice. It shows them as brothers of Jesus, strong in His strength, calmed with His peace and gladdened with His joy. The Fatherhood of God is the one presupposition of all their thought. The rock on

which they build the edifice of their activities is that this world is ordered and administered in holiness and love. The bond of unity for all the truths they teach is, that God is love, love of men, love of all men; love of their welfare, which is holiness and righteousness: that He sends His Son to seek and to save that which is lost; that He gives His Spirit in fatherly love to all men, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth; that He is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

(3) But is God the Father of every human being, so that each can say, "I am God's child"? Is the Fatherhood of God universal, or is it restricted to those who are consciously the disciples of the Lord Jesus?

The Father loved the "world"; that is undeniable and ought to be received with unreserved gratitude and adoration. God "loveth man as man." [5] "He willeth not that any should perish."

Nor can this be refuted, that to Jesus God is

[5] Titus iii., 4.

essentially, and not metaphorically, the Father ; the term is not a mere name, it stands for a fact ; a real character ; an actual relation ; and if God is *essentially* Father, He is *universally* Father to man, and Jesus is the type of man's definite relation to God, and so man is, as such, a son of God. God is the true home and homeland of the soul.

We must not confound a fact with our knowledge of the fact. Facts do not depend for their existence on our cognition. The light is here whether we see it or not. Sounds are playing about me even if I do not hear them. Because the sense of filiation to God may die out of man, or remain dormant, it does not follow that the fact of paternity dies out of God. Sin may destroy the sense of our relation to God ; but it cannot destroy the Father's relations to us. He is all that He was. He changes not. The prodigal's wanderings into a far country, and his debased living, are a grievous waste and heinous wrong ; but the father before whom he has sinned is still a father, as the heavens are still the heavens. Sin slays the filial spirit in man, and thereby the inheritance of the son is lost ; he is alienated from God ; but God was in Christ, reconciling an

alienated world and quickening the sense of sonship into life again. So men became consciously the children of God, by faith which is in Jesus Christ, having received the witness of the Spirit within them to the fact of the new creation.

This universal Fatherhood is the pre-supposition, or the positive declaration, of the New Testament. For Jesus, God is the all-enfolding, all-pervading, all-sustaining life and love ; revealing the holy Fatherhood in its essence towards all (1) by the communication of life in steady and limitless floods, and (2) pouring out His redeeming love in overflowing fulness. There is nothing local or restricted in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Jesus conceived Him. His elections are inclusive, not exclusive, and His special gifts to the individual are for the service of the race. All the ideas of Jesus are cast in the mould of universality. It is the rock on which He builds the Sermon on the Mount. He urges men to prove themselves sons of One who is their Father, by loving their enemies. It is the soul of the parable of the Prodigal Son. It is claimed by Paul in his address to the Athenians, to be as universal as the offspring of God, and in his letter

to the Ephesians, he describes it as the source of every other fatherhood. It is founded in the very nature of God and man, revealed with conquering charm in redemption, and perfected by the ministry of the Spirit to the soul of the individual and the race.

VII.

It is the pre-eminent worth of this idea and of its embodiment in Jesus that makes it distinctive and final in the Christian Religion, and gives to that Religion the foremost place amongst the religions of the world.

Jesus does not represent it as an exhaustive statement of the doctrine of God. It is not. He assumes much, and He tells more. It is of the Father He is speaking when He says, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; for such the Father seeketh to worship Him." It is the Holy Spirit He promises to fill His place, in the life and experience of the disciples after His own departure. The Spirit will guide them into the truth, will comfort them, and will interpret and apply the revelations they have received.

God is manifold, and no one name can declare

Him. He is ineffable. He was to Job : He is to us. Full knowledge is too high for us ; we cannot attain to it. Nature and life, the great personalities of history, and the long succession of the ages only reveal part of His ways. Take all the names of God in all religions. Despise none of them ; eject what is false in them ; hold fast the true and the good ; and yet to meet the deepest needs of the fathomless spirit of man we must have this name of "Holy Father." Leave room for the agnostics' "unknowable" ; it expresses the limitations of our knowledge, and reminds us of the mediæval description of Deity as the "Abyss." Recognize the indestructible "energy" which is the centre of all being ; it is only the name given by science to omnipotence. Admit the "power that makes for righteousness" ; it is the verdict of history, and it is an argument for a moral personality at the back and at the beginning of all things. Humanity may use the entire results of the evolution of religion, for man needs the whole God ; God in His threefoldness and in His manifoldness, but the name that is above every name is the name of "Father," the name which Carlyle tells us he saw "as if written and shining for me in mild, pure

splendour on the black bosom of the night."

That name signalises the distinctive content of the Christianity of Christ. The Idea contains within itself new epochs, social revolutions, fresh advances of the wondrous life of man. It is a seminal principle. Everything is in it that means good for man. Universal brotherhood is in it; "soul liberty" is in it; property as the patrimony of God, and not an egoistic and exclusive possession of the individual is there; worship, as personal and spiritual, freed from ritual and casuistry, from legalism and the glorification of the letter, and as consisting of loving obedience to God, and loving ministry to man is embraced within it. Solace for the troubled, calm for the tumults of life, and strength for its warfare, are there. Clear-eyed and courageous optimism is in it; indeed, there is nothing for the individual or for the race, that means illumination, peace, joy, righteousness, perfection, which is not contained within the ample folds of this greatest and best name for God.

Hence it was the soul of the propaganda of Christ. He taught much because He taught this.

He achieved great things because He proclaimed this truth first and last. He roused party passion to fury because He was heroic enough to apply this teaching of the universal Fatherhood of God, in the most thorough-going way, to all social conditions and facts. It was this that flung Him into the clutches of the political authorities, caused Him to be arrested in the name of public safety, classed with malefactors, and nailed to the Cross. He preached God as the Father who is in heaven, not the national God of Israel, not the Lord of warring hosts, but God the Father of all men, of Naaman the leper as well as Elisha the prophet, of the despised Samaritans as well as the favoured Jews, of the common people as well as the elect, of the outcast classes not less than the leaders of religion. As Rosadi says, "humanity is one people and one family whom God loves and watches over from heaven with a Father's impartial eye. Here is the mighty lever of a whole social revolution." [6] And Christ uses it freely, and the upheaval starts. It begins in Nazareth ; but it is not ended yet. It starts in the first sermon

[6] "The Trial of Jesus," by Giovanni Rosadi. Hutchinson and Co., pp. 9, 10.

of the prophet; it has been renewed wherever the same truth has been fearlessly taught. It aroused hostility, and endangered His life; it creates antagonism still, and men must be ready to pay the price if they are resolved to be true to the Master. For we are still the victims of blind racial hatred, and have not ceased to judge the manhood of men by the colour of the skin rather than by the strength of the brain, the loftiness of the spirit and the goodness of the character.

Henry Ward Beecher said, "I have nothing to ask for since I have known what God's Fatherhood means. I have but one petition, and that is 'Thy will be done.' It is a fountain of peace perennially running, unfailing in every exigency of life. Nothing brings so sweet a content as the assurance, 'I am God's child'; this is peace; this is the way to perfection for the unit and for the race."

Wonderful is the change which has been wrought in human history by this one idea. History ceases to be a puzzle and becomes a majestic progress. Courage takes the place of cowardice, songs of sighs, and hope of despair. The grandest, tenderest, most inspiring thought

that has ever come to men is this idea of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

VIII.

What is the attitude of the modern spirit towards this idea ?

Certainly in nothing have we more demonstrably "gone back to Christ" in recent years than in the re-assertion of the Fatherhood of God as the characteristic content of the Religion of Jesus.

For centuries it was pushed out of sight. Quite early, the Church, from various causes, lost this conception of God. The Sovereign eclipsed the Father ; the sceptre of the enthroned King hid the revelation of the Cross from view. The Eternal Will buried the Eternal Love. Men debated fiercely concerning the divinity of the Person of Jesus, and pushed aside His universal relation to all the sons of men ; the rigorous absolutism of the Eternal Will was all in all ; and the tenderness and pity of the heart of the Father were forgotten. And so men were without the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore, without hope and joy and grace. The Religion of Jesus lost its energy and vitality ; the Church became the world,

and the Gospel the tool of self-seeking men.

Augustine, trained as an advocate, furnished with a large knowledge of the Roman law, impressed by the majesty of Roman rule, and the width of Roman government, sees life as *Will* and dispenses with the Fatherhood of God. Anselm reduced the image of the Deity to the proportions of a feudal King. Aquinas destroys the Fatherhood of God by his doctrine of theism. Dante knows nothing of it, and only mentions it when speaking of the Lord's Prayer. Mystics, like Bernard of Clairvaux, and Francis of Assisi, fail to realize it. In fact, through the middle ages the doctrine of the divine Sovereignty was supreme. The Pope first claimed its spiritual exercise through the Church, and the Emperor its secular through the State, and at last the Pope characteristically seized both.

The Reformation was the beginning of the recovery of the conception of the Fatherhood of God. Luther saw something of it, if only as through a glass darkly, and was glad ; preached it, and made others glad. Calvin spoke of the "fatherly love of God towards the human race," [7]

[7] "Institutes," i., p. 14 (2).

and declared that "throughout the whole course of Providence, either the fatherly favour and beneficence of God, or His judical severity shines out."[8] But he was too much indebted to Augustine to fail to re-assert the Sovereignty of God, and to set it out in "an austere and repellent form." It is more singular that Arminius missed the opportunity of bringing it within the range of his thought, considering the energy with which He fought for the freedom of man, and the faith He expressed in God's supreme love for all men. But it was Leibnitz, the philosopher, who declared "Our end is to separate men from the false ideas which represent God to them as an absolute prince using despotic power, little likely to be loved and little worthy of being loved";[9] and, thus, most effectually prepared the way for the teachers of a later day.

In the evangelical revival of Wesley there was a new experience of the love of God

[8] Ibid. i., p. 170. Cf. "The Continuity of Christian Thought: A Study of Modern Theology in the Light of its History," by S. V. G. Allen. Ward, Lock and Co., p. 294, et seq.

[9] "Theodicy." Part i., p. 6. Cf. "Fairbairn, Philosophy of the Christian Religion," p. 179.

in the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit, and that experience implicitly contained the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood ; but it has been by the teaching of Erskine and McLeod Campbell, Maurice and Dr. Morison, still more under the influence of the teaching of "Evolution," and most of all by the recognition of Jesus as the supreme authority in Religion set forth in the New Testament, that the thought of men has been carried with irresistible energy to this highest, deepest, broadest, and truest conception of God, in which is declared the sovereignty of a loving, holy, redeeming and regenerating Fatherhood of God to all mankind.[10]

[10] "The Fatherhood of God in Christian Truth and Life," by Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A. Chap. v.

LECTURE VII.

Man as seen in the Christian Religion.

The Christian Religion supplies, in the person and teachings of its Founder, a revelation of God as the Holy and Righteous Father of the human race, which is perfect, if it is not full, far-reaching though it is not exhaustive, and ethically and spiritually life-giving, although it does not reply to all the questions of the spirit of man. Christianity answers as no other religion has ever done, the profound enquiries, "*Who* is God ? and *What* ?"

Does the Christian Religion also supply the most true, authentic and sufficing interpretation of man, of his necessities and capacities, of his value and relations, of his place in the great scheme of things, of his weakness and sin, of his possibilities and destiny ? "What do our *sources* say to that other and cognate question : *who* and *what* is man ? *who* and *what* are we ?"

Do they tell us anything we never hear from

other masters of the spiritual life? Does the content of the evangel differentiate the Religion of Jesus from the religions of Moses and Mahomet, Confucius and Buddha? Have we better guidance and larger help in living the true life from Christianity, than from the recent discoveries of science, the discussions of philosophy or the contributions of other religions?

The principles we have established in these Lectures send us for answers straight to Jesus Himself; to the ideas He pre-supposes or communicates concerning man and men; to the impression which He made of Himself, as a man, upon the minds of His contemporaries; and to His own life, in its springs and relations, in its qualities and achievements; that is, to His religious consciousness, specific work and incalculable influence on the ages. Jesus is the standard man. He is the measure of manhood. His fundamental relations to God, to man, and to the world, reveal ours, and are ours, in fact, if not in knowledge. He is of universal significance for humanity. His moral consciousness is what ours ought to be. His harmony with the Eternal Will of the Holy Father is what ours may be, and must

be. His sustained will for the right and good ; His enthusiasm for humanity, and unruffled peace await us, as His Spirit enters into, and takes possession of us. His nature, experience, character, work and influence, are our ideal, made visible and actual in the life of the world as standard, as pattern and prophecy for all the sons of men. Man is revealed in his reality and fulness in Jesus Christ.

But before we look at the revelation, let us cast a passing glance at man as seen in science, in philosophy and in other religions.

I.

(1) First : Biological science tells us that we belong to the animal creation, and are akin to the beasts that perish ; that we are a part of nature, and have advanced by indescribably slow and painful stages from the lowest possible planes of organized vital existence, to the commanding position we now occupy as the crown of the animal world ; that physically we are the Creator's master-piece, and in all likelihood our animal development has reached finality. The ascent of man is a reality. The evolution of the higher factors and spiritual qualities has been definite

and decided. Not, indeed, always direct. Far from that! And though the records of the scientist do not tell of an instantaneous catastrophe, or "fall" from a full-orbed perfection of character, like that which fills so large a space in the writings of some theologians and poets, yet there have been many fatal deviations, and degradations, from the better to the worse, from the higher to the lower, from life to petrifaction, from freedom to slavery, from the authority of conscience to the tyranny of tradition, from the eternal light to the outer darkness; in short, not one "fall of man," but a succession of "falls."

"Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud."[1]

(2) That progress is more vividly seen in the current expositions of the personality of man. Life, though on a physical basis, has a spiritual super-structure of infinite meaning. Man knows that he is a spirit and *has* a body, and that he is in a spiritual world. We see the dignity and vastness of the universe. In it, we feel:

"A presence that disturbs us with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime

[1] Tennyson in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After."

> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

That sense of a presence is instinctive and inevitable. It belongs to our very make as man. We may not know what to call it, and it may remain entirely non-vocal; but it is there; a sense of the super-human, of the divine, a feeling after that unutterable "Someone" or "Somewhat" that we, in our poverty of speech, call "God."

Man is made for great things, for the greatest, and feels that he ought to seek them. He can do wrong. But he knows he *ought* not. He can choose the right, and he knows he ought. It is his business to get rid of evil, to make the worse give place to the better, and the better to the best, and to build a new social order. He is altruistic in the soul of him, in a world that is founded on altruism. He is endowed with an intense life, with qualities and forces that penetrate the supersensible realm; and prognosticate immortality. He is made for religion; for the highest religion.

That is man as philosophy and science find him to-day.

(3) Now it is with that man the religions of the world have been concerned; and what have they done with him and for him? Chiefly this. They have fastened upon his weakness and sin, his sufferings and death. They have fixed their gaze on his failures, and not on his faculties. They have told him of his wrongs and doom, and not of his possibilities and aids. They have been eloquent in denouncing his "falls," and silent or mistaken as to his ascents. They have met his defeats with cynicism, and his sinful deeds with the doctrine of fate. They have deplored his misfortunes, and told him of the invincible and invisible forces working against him; the principalities and powers making for his destruction. They have had no balm of divinely authenticated forgiveness for his wounded conscience, and no method of hushing the discords of his soul. They have given him a message laden with negatives instead of nerving him with incessant affirmatives; they have wasted themselves and him in rejections, in barking against the bad instead of chanting the beauty of the good, and

hymning the praises of hope, remembering that,

> "Every gift of noble origin
> Is breathed upon by Hope's eternal breath."

In his first sermon Buddha proclaimed "Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering, the presence of objects we hate is suffering, separation from objects we love is suffering, not to obtain what we desire is suffering, clinging to existence is suffering. Complete cessation of existence is cessation of suffering." And although his pessimistic shriek dies down into a description of the eight-fold path ; yet it leaves us face to face with life as a tragedy and without any rainbow arch in the sky of the recently deluged land.

Paul summed up the effect of the Mosaic Religion in its teaching about man when he exclaimed, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, in my lower self, dwelleth no good thing ; for while to do right is present with me, the power to carry it out is not." But *he* does not stop there ! Jesus lifts him out of his despair, and in a burst of praise he exclaims, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For the Spirit's law, telling of Life in Christ Jesus—has

set me free from the law that deals only with sin and death."

That is the crucial fact. The religions of the world deal only with sin and suffering, defeat and death. Jesus brings life and brings it abundantly.

Science, philosophy, and the great religions of the world, much as they tell us, leave man still an unsolved problem. We are like tenants of a many-storied mansion, rich in rooms, and in priceless treasures. Science gives us the key to the lowest story ; philosophy takes us higher and further, admitting us to inestimable wealth ; the prophets and teachers of religion increase our knowledge ; but, we feel not only, that we have not seen all, but that we have not seen the best. We have only touched the fringes of the great mystery of man, and we still sigh and cry for light, more light.

II.

First, man as seen in the Christian Religion is man revealed as he really is in the soul of him, as God sees him now in his manifold and far-reaching relations, and as God expects him to become. Jesus discovers man, as Newton discovered the fact and law of gravitation ; as Humphrey

Davy discovered phosphorus, first, and afterwards Faraday, who, in his own language, was the "greatest discovery" of all. "Jesus knew what was in man," is the comment of one who had watched Him long and lovingly, and had abundant proofs of His deep penetration and unerring insight; and it is the confession of all who have studied Him, as well as His words, that He knew men as no one else ever did; and embodied him in His essential self and marvellous manifoldness as no one else ever can.

(1) True, He is silent about some of the curious questions of the brain on which some men would fain hear Him talk. Not a word escapes Him about "the origin of man," nothing as to the point from which he started, whether high as the angels or low as the dust, nothing about a slow or sudden "fall," or the steps along which he has advanced; nothing about our "subliminal" self; but very much about the lower selfish self, that needs so much mastering and bringing into subjection; nothing as to the "times and seasons" which the Father has kept in His own power; but everything about the power to lift us on high and to make new men of us in Him.

The silences of Jesus are the signs of His greatness, the marks of His earnest mind, and are as suggestive as His speech. He rigidly confines Himself to the absolutely needful, goes by the shortest course to what really counts, and tells us what concerns the essential life of man, what uplifts the soul, broadens the outlook, kills despair, inspires effort, puts iron into the will, and saves and remakes the man.

(2) He sees man in his infinite relations to the visible and invisible ; to the "things" he has to subdue to use ; to the spirits with whom he may commune ; and to the Eternal Spirit, the unseen, ever-present factor in the history of humanity and in the history of Jesus Himself. Man is not what he seems. He is more. He is not as the senses say, rounded off into a self-contained and self-sufficient individual, imprisoned within five feet of body, restricted to a few years of time, and locked up within physical boundaries as between high walls. No. He is a self-conscious, moral, and religious being, with relations to the vast and hoary earth, and to the far-spreading and all-covering heavens ; to the past, out of which he comes trailing clouds of glory, but also bringing

garments that are soiled, and fetters that hinder his march to the future towards which he is journeying as the predestined heir of "glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life"; to his fellows, near and far, on the hearth of his home, and in the back-woods of the world; in the village and the city, in the slum and the sanctuary, in the nation and the world; to the religions and religious institutions of man, to the inspiring personality of world leaders, and to Mount Zion, to the city of the everlasting God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to countless hosts of angels, to the great festal gathering and church of the first-born whose names are recorded in heaven, and to the Judge, who is God of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus the negotiator of the New Covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks in more gracious tones than that of Abel.

(3) It is this which gives distinction to the revelation of man made by Jesus. The wealth of a fact is discovered by setting it in all its relations. Electricity was a fact of nature from the beginning, and was known as far away as the time of Aristotle; but men did not

see that bit of amber in its various relations to the forces and factors around, and could not convert it into light, and heat and motion, and use it for the transmission of messages and of men. These things had to be discovered by Faraday and Wheatstone, Edison and Kelvin.

The same may be affirmed of a fact of history. There is nothing that has been ethically productive of greater good than the discovery made at the beginning of the seventeenth century, of the principle that a magistrate has no right whatever to interfere with the claim of a man to act according to his conscientious convictions in those things which concern God and Religion ; but it has taken a long time to see that fact in its various relations and applications, and to discover all that it means. In England we have seen its relations to kings, and at great cost have set them outside the realm of conscience, but we have not even yet compelled parliaments to take and keep their true place.

The late Prof. T. H. Green taught that ethical progress is marked by the extension and application of ethical ideas, and gave as proof, the history of the word "neighbour." At the start its

range was severely limited, and did not even relate to the man next door, unless he was of the same clan or tribe. But Jesus widened it until it swept in the human worlds which the Jews had left out. He took in not only the Samaritan but the barbarian ; everybody, in short, that might be in need, or towards whom another might stand in the position of helper.

So it is with Christ's whole treatment of man. He sets him in his true place ; and traces out his bearings in all directions, makes him central to life, human of the human, and divine of the divine. When he repents his repentance tells on God and gives joy to the angels. If a little child should be tripped up by a stone wickedly placed in his path, the angels of God will seize the wrong-doer and send him to his doom ; for the "little ones" of the earth have their representatives in the presence of the Father. He is a vital part of the actual, but he belongs to the ideal ; he is a unit, and yet he belongs to and is part of the whole of humanity ; he belongs to time, and yet transcends it ; he is wrong, but he knows it ; he is poor, yet as R. L. Stevenson says, "no man was ever so poor that he could express all he has in him in

words." He is such an animated series of contradictions that Pascal wrote, "If you exalt him I will abase him ; and if you abase him I will exalt him," and Shakespeare exclaims, "What a piece of work is man ! How noble in reason ! How infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable ; in action how like an angel ; in apprehension how like a god !"

III.

Again, man is a free personality, and the kinship that is keenest and most decisive of all, is essentially personal. His distinction is not his relation to the stars, or to the cattle on a thousand hills, nor even to the vast human race, or to the spirits that obey the heavenly will ; but in the fact of his participation in the very nature of God. It is that which contains and crowns all.

Through his relation to the Supreme Person of history, the unique and unequalled figure of the whole past, he enters into union with God, becomes consciously one with Him as a son with a father, as a spirit with the Father of spirits. "In the field of spiritual affection that lies around our will, the common essence of man and God, the divine element that spreads its

margin into us, has its home, its life, its reciprocal recognition, its bursts of human power, its answers of Divine compassion, its deep shadows of contrition and returning gleams of restoration."[2] That "common essence of man and God" is an uplifting, ennobling, and inspiring fact. In a deep and true sense, man one with Christ, is also one with God the Father.[3]

Jesus repudiates the notion that man's sonship to God is dependent upon his physical nature. He does not find man's pedigree in his body. He bids us not to look there. A genealogical tree that is rooted in the earth is of little use in tracing the origin and development of the real man. When men expected to make an end of

[2] "Martineau's Essays." Vol. IV., pp. 578-80.

[3] "We may be all partial incarnations of a larger self. Incarnation of a portion of a divine spirit therefore involves no scientific dislocation or contradiction, nor need it involve any material mechanism other than that to which we are accustomed. For only the germ is derived from others; the body is built under the guidance of the indwelling, living, personal entity; it is adapted to and serves to display the features of that entity under the limitations and disabilities of a material aspect, as the epiphany of an artist's conception is restrained by the limitations of his medium, as well as by his lack of executive skill." Sir Oliver Lodge, "Hibbert Journal," Vol. ii., No. 3, p. 470.

the reasoning of Jesus about their sins, and to ward off His rebukes by saying "We are Abraham's sons," He at once exposed the fallacy of tracing their relationship to God along their physical descent : "God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Man is not a son of God because he is the final term of a series of animals, but because he is capable of spiritual resemblance to God, of oneness with His mind and heart and character. He is related to Him, not through his body, but through his soul.

That is the teaching of the Incarnation. As Jesus is to God, so in a deep and true sense, are we. The Holy Fatherhood involves and implies the sonship and the brotherhood. It is a great saying, and we should shrink from it, did not Jesus authorize it. But He does authorise it. I fully recognize the difficulties in the way of believing it, the facts that seem to contradict it ; but "no man hath seen *himself*," much less his neighbour, as he really *is*, and in the highest ranges of his being. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the God, who made man, and loves man, and redeems man, and who is his Father, "He hath declared man" ; and He

declares nothing less than this, that we must not shut man off from God, and separate man and God in thought and in fact. Jesus is, in Paul's great phrase, the Mediator between God and man; and He mediates the one to the other because He is both God and man, and both are one in Him. He is not a bridge over the gulf, said to yawn between the human and the divine. The human and the divine meet in Him in their reality and perfection. He is always man, and never ceases to be man; but He is also always God, and never ceases to be God. He is the highest God, though not the whole God; and He is the highest man, the inclusive, the universal man, the consummating man, though not all men. He is the brightness of man's glory, as well as of God's; and the express image of man as well as of the Father. In Him you see the humanity of God, and the divinity of man. The God who is immanent in the universe as Spirit, is incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, the living proof that God does not stand outside the human struggle and storm, but shares its conflicts, suffers in its tragedies, carries its burdens, and is the Soul of it all. So Jesus reveals man, and creates that

new humanity of which He is the Second Adam, that coming humanity predestined to be made like Himself.

IV.

Further: No reader of the story of the Founder of the Christian Religion can escape the impression that Jesus secures an epoch-making ascent in the value of man as man.

In the eyes of Jesus, man is a being of incomputable worth, of wonderful potencies and splendid promise. In spite of his immaturity and infamy, his weakness and sin, he has a mind of wondrous faculty, with inherited aptitudes for enjoyment and achievement that make him an astonishment to his fellows. He is able to judge the highest and deepest things. He has a heart that spends itself in love, in self-sacrifice, and heroism. He has capacities for patience, inflexible steadtastness and for enduring suffering on behalf of the causes that fill his past with splendour and his future with hope. Hence, when Christ takes the whole world of "things," and sets them over against one man's life, against his mere chance of being and living, and declares that that world is not enough to pay for him, He is not indulging in

oriental metaphor, but delivering a measured judgment, based on full and faultless knowledge, and sustained by unimpeachable evidence. It is not a florid extravagance, but a verifiable fact, expressed in the balanced language of sobriety and reason.

So exalted is Jesus' estimate of the intrinsic worth of man, that it never occurs to Him to think of him as an insignificant atom, altogether unlikely to attract the passing notice of the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, or to contrast his ignoble littleness with the vast magnitudes of the starlit spaces of the far-extending sky. When He considers the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and stars which God has ordained, He does not ask in self-humiliation, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" That would be to judge by appearance, and not by reality; to measure dignity and worth by outward circumstance and pomp, and not by inward quality and character. It would not be righteous judgment, according to Christ; but the repetition of the mistake of the seer who was ready to anoint for Israel's king, not a brave and true soul, but a mass of mighty muscle; not a

man after God's own heart, like David, but a defiant braggart, of the type of Goliath of Gath. Far more of the mind of Jesus had that negress who, when she was told of the condescending love of God to sinful men, exclaimed, "It was just like Him," instead of exploding in expected surprise. The act by which love becomes perfect, and in which it attains its end, is neither a compromise of the divine nature, nor a proof of God's mistaken judgment of the worth of man. It is the testimony that He seeth not as man seeth, and that He knows best what the man He has made in His own image really is.

Huxley, in one of his lectures, relates an incident concerning a visit made by him to the Highlands of Scotland. One day, as he wandered over the moors, he picked up a moss-cup, and began to examine it with his pocket lens. A Highland shepherd, moved by curiosity, came near and watched him with interest. The professor asked him whether he would like to look at the familiar object through the lens. He eagerly assented. As he looked, his eyes dilated with wonder, and presently he said, "Can this be a moss-cup?" Assured that it was, he asked that he might look

again ; then, handing back the lens and the moss-cup, after a moment's silence he said, "Oh, sir, I wish you had never shown it to me." "Why ?" asked the professor, in surprise. "Because I do tread upon thousands of them every day of my life," was his reply. The familiar, common object had been invested with such mystery of wonder that the thought of trampling on it seemed sacrilege. Jesus is the lens through which we may see man as He saw him, and understand the rank He assigns to him in the creation of God.

(1) Everywhere Jesus treats man as a free, distinct, and independent personality. He takes hold of the very core of his individuality, separates him from the crowd in which he has lost himself, from the class and sect that crushes his native force, from the irresistible powers of nature that menace him whenever he proceeds to any act of self-assertion. Jesus breaks "with the corporate instinct of His devout contemporaries. With resolute determination and inexorable clearness, He sets the individual in the place of the nation, the party, or the sect."[4] He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He sought out and

[4] "Jesus," by Bousset, p. 124.

appealed to the individual, lost in the mass of "Israel," or the other mass of "Gentiles," buried out of sight and grasp by the pressing multitude. There were nations, there were churches, there were schools, and there were parties, but there was no man. The individualistic note was not heard. No one dared to stand on his own feet, and speak as a real individual in a real world, responsible as a self-conscious intelligence for fulfilling himself and realising the end for which he was made, in all and through all.

Jesus rescued man from men. It was a wonderful redemption, and it is not ended yet. He stood there, Himself alone, and apart; absolutely isolated from churches and priests, from nations and kings, entirely alone; and He said, "Come to Me, come to Me." He taught that religion begins and ends in personal loyalty to Himself, and living our life for His sake; that it was worth while to forsake father and mother, church and state, for His sake and the Gospel's; for in finding Him men would find themselves.

Religions always deteriorate in the hands of organizers, and become engines of tyranny over the individual and machines for the suppression of

his freedom. It is the law of organizations, and the law was never more operative than in the day of Christ. The Jewish Church was one compact tyranny over the individual conscience, worked with death-dealing energy throughout the entire field. The very presence of Jesus was a protest against it, and His action a deliverance from it. He told each man that He was a *man;* a man for whom God Himself was in constant search, as a shepherd for a lost sheep, or a housewife for a lost coin, or a father for his lost son ; a man to whom "talents," faculties, and forces, had been given by God ; it might be five or two, or only one ; but certainly not a soul was left without any ; and as certainly each one would have to give an account before the living God. "All depends upon you individually," He cried, "and upon you alone. There is nothing behind which you can shelter or conceal yourself. Two men shall be lying on one bed ; the one shall be accepted, the other cast aside. Two women shall be grinding at one mill ; one shall be accepted, the other cast aside. The one sinner who turns and repents is worth more in the sight of God than the whole herd of the righteous." [5]

[5] "Jesus," by Bousset, p. 125.

So Jesus, the greatest of all the formative forces of history, delivers man, the individual, from men in their massed organizations and activities, restores man's faith in his own accountability and dignity, develops as nothing else has done the conception of personality, and teaches as no other religion does, that man, though the sorriest collection of broken fragments, is nevertheless a whole in himself, and must rule himself, as king of himself, under the rule of God and for God. Jesus is the Prophet and Source of the liberties of the soul.

(2) Jesus also rescues man from nature. He treats him as a part of nature, but more than nature, akin to the kosmos but not subject to it; in fact, as placed over it, to use it, as a storehouse of divine ideas, a repertory of spiritual potencies, a mirror of himself and of God.

Man is a free personality, not an automaton; a conscious cause as well as an obvious effect; under laws, but not wholly determined by laws; in the plan of the world, but above it; dowered with the high prerogative of will, and no mere link in the chain of causation, or cog on the wheel of an irresistible movement; capable of

indignant rejections and of careful elections ; of choosing life rather than death ; the high, and not the low ; the good, and not the bad ; able to stand alone against the world, and to die the death of the martyr rather than be a coward or a slave.

In nothing does Jesus show the exalted character of His conception of man more than in the way in which He trusts him. See the momentous revelations He puts into his keeping, as to one able to judge the highest and deepest things of God, and to communicate them to others. How vast the responsibility He puts on his shoulders when He charges him with carrying forward His own great work for the whole world ! What trust there is in His appeals to man's faith and loyalty, to his heroic enthusiasm and self-sacrificing devotion ; in His demands for the patience that refuses to be crushed, the meekness that conquers the proud, and brings down the mighty from their seats, the holiness that penetrates and renews the world.

Mahometanism shuts up man in a fatalistic prison-house in paralyzing subjection to an irresistible power ; Buddhism feeds the desire

for escape from the accumulating sufferings of this present evil world. Hinduism subjects man to a "curse," and describes his fate as that of a wanderer from body to body, now higher, now lower, the soul "fettered" and doomed to continued birth in a body, only a few elect souls securing emancipation.[6] Jesus creates a new consciousness of self, of a larger, nobler self, a self penetrated by God's most intimate presence in the soul, and uplifted and inspired by a new view of the universe. He fires the new man with an indomitable will, with the courage never to submit or yield to what is evil; and with what else is not to be overcome in the struggle against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. He gives to man a conscious affinity with the universal; tells him that he transcends the finite, and is one with the infinite life and the organ of the infinite mind. To him the appeal is addressed: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are

[6] "Hinduism." By L. D. Barnett, M.A., D.Litt. Constable and Co. p. 2, 3.

lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Lifted to those ranges, Ruskin, the prophet of the beautiful, describes man as capable of an infinite height of strange and marvellous developments; and Emerson cries aloud, "Trust thyself, exert thyself; follow thine own soul; be true to it, and all will be well"; and both are echoing the great words of the Christian Religion.

(3) Again, Jesus discovers the enormous potency of some of the despised factors of our human nature, such as pity and patience, meekness and humility. He gives these passive virtues a primary place amongst the quiet energies that will ultimately conquer the earth, unite man with man, and create a social condition in which the service of all will be the aim of each, and justice to all the possession of each, and the brotherhood of all the joy of all. They are the soul of His beatitudes and the charm of His parables. "The world calls the proud happy," and "dishonours the poor man." Jesus reverses that judgment at a stroke, and tells the poor of the treasure "in the heavens that

fadeth not, where thief draws not nigh nor moth destroyeth." "Blessed," says He, "are the poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."[7] The world applauds the "pushful." His benediction falls on the gentle, and His promise of abiding good is to those who refuse to push for place and power. The world honours the ruthless invader, the callous tyrant, the fiery persecutor. Jesus gives solace to those who mourn, and encourages those who by their patience and sweet reasonableness defy and conquer the lordly tyrannies of the world. The tragedy of the "Trojan Women" "is, perhaps, in European literature, the first great expression of the spirit of pity for mankind exalted into a moving principle—a principle which has made the most precious, and possibly the most destructive, elements of innumerable rebellions, revolutions, and martyrdoms, and of at least two great religions."[8] Jesus stirred all these forces of

[7] Malachi iii., 15; James ii., 6; Matt. vi., 19, 20; Matt. v., 3.

[8] "Pity is a rebel passion. Its hand is against the strong, against the organized force of society, against conventional sanctions and accepted gods. It is the Kingdom of Heaven within us fighting against the brute powers of the world; and it is apt to have these qualities of unreason, of contempt for the counting of costs and the balancing of sacrifices, of reck-

pity and compassion for man in his misery and weakness, to their depths, added incalculably to their force, cleansed them of selfishness and bitterness, and set them to work with all-conquering energy against the wrongs of the world. These qualities reign supreme in the days of His flesh, become the source of His unequalled magnetism throughout the centuries, and are all summed up in the deep, mysterious words, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me"; and in so far as His disciples have been swayed by His compassion, sustained by His patient endurance, and made heroic by His example, they have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and re-made the world.

V.

Moreover, man is seen in the Christian Religion attaining his goal, achieving an ideal manhood, realising his personal and collective values, discharging the duties and enjoying the privileges arising out of his manifold relations, by the

lessness, and even, in the last resort, of ruthlessness, which so often marks the paths of heavenly things and the doings of the children of light. It brings not peace, but a sword." "The Trojan Women of Euripides," by Gilbert Murray, M.A., LL.D. p. 7.

whole-hearted surrender of himself to God, in glad subjection and loving obedience. That is the way the Religion of Jesus marks out for man to take to reach his true goal. Man gives himself up to the Eternal will, and thus becomes one with the Eternal mind and heart, and with the Eternal purpose and plan. He has "attained" his object and is at rest in God.

(1) It is such a total and unreserved dedication of Jesus to the Father which is the key to His character and the explanation of His career. He is the gift of God, and gives Himself to God, and is one with God, perfectly acquiescent in the will of the Father. It is His meat to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. His peace springs from that union. His joyful obedience to righteousness, His fearless courage in insisting on inwardness and truth in a day of hypocrisy and falsehood, His severity in rebuking insincerity and hardness of heart, His overmastering force in making His moral demands upon men, His serenity in the sacrifice of His life on the Cross—these are the fruits of His delight in doing the will of God.

(2) So it is with the man who is in Christ

Jesus. He is one with the Eternal will. He says, "I must be about my Father's business," and finds the nourishment of His spiritual being in doing the will of His Father in heaven and finishing His work. The dedication of the soul to God brings the fact of sonship into consciousness, and makes it the light of life. The soul finds its perfect freedom in subjection to the authority of God, and its deepest delight in the sense of harmony with His mind. Man's freedom from anxiety and worry comes from a joyful acceptance of God's order of life. Man receives back his will, his life, his soul redeemed and transfigured by his identity with the life of God. This gives unity of purpose to his action, prevents the dismemberment of the man by divided purposes, and "rolls up all his strength and sweetness, his passion and wisdom into one, and makes of him a perfect man exulting in perfection."

For man as man is not made, is never made; but is always in the making. He has only just started; the pilgrimage is yet to be undertaken through rich pastures, dark valleys, across high mountains and over vast table-lands. Man is not as Augustine thought him, a "mass of perdi-

tion"; he is as Jesus saw him, a mass of potencies; he is not a "total ruin"; he is an edifice, sorely damaged, indeed, but in course of rebuilding, and with much of the scaffolding still up. He has not become, he is becoming, or rather he is power to become; yes to become a full and free man in Christ Jesus, and like Christ Jesus under His redeeming rule. He is a traveller in a world all gates, all opportunities, all resources. His embarrassments are in his riches, not in his poverty. His resources are immeasurable. The world belongs to him; life belongs to him, things present are his and better things to come. All things are his because he is Christ's and Christ is God's. Magazines of power are to right and left of him; above him and around him. He speaks of Christ as "the Fulness," and says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

> "Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
> He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;
> Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
> Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

The Christian does not die; he only changes his place of living. He is now a son of God, but it

doth not yet appear what he is to be. Browning says,

> "Man is not God; but hath God's end to serve,
> A master to obey, a course to take,
> Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become."

What that "somewhat to become" is we cannot yet tell; but we see Jesus, at least in part, and we know that our destiny is to become like Him.

VI.

Finally, what about the evil in the world and in men? Other religions start from that, and put it first, and keep it to the front. Does Jesus know nothing about it? Has He nothing to say concerning the tragic actualities of the world? Is there no wrong to be mastered, no guilt to be cleansed, no fire of sin to be quenched?

(1) The prophet pictures Him as making an end of sin and bringing in an everlasting righteousness; and John the Baptist points to Him as God's Lamb taking away the sin of the world. And did not Christ Himself say, "Out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within,

and defile the man." [9] That is as concrete as it is awful, and as searching and inward as it is practical and direct. He says little about sin, but He is most severe in His denunciations of sins. He will not debate the origin of evil, or discuss the current theories concerning it; and only refers to them to urge personal repentance as the way of escape from impending doom, You want to know what Jesus thought of sins? Read His fiery denunciation of the sins of the respectable leaders of religion! Could any language outrun His, in fire and passion? in vehement denunciation and scathing rebuke? [10]

(2) But that is not all! There are other sinners than those of the synagogue and the schools, the sinners of the streets and the slums, the despised tax collectors, the condemned outcasts. Jesus sees them shepherdless, leaderless, lost; tempted from without and within; in gravest peril, the victims of hideous vices, but always loved by God; sought out by Him, redeemable and to be redeemed and guided to salvation.

[9] Mark vii. 21-22.

[10] Mark vii., 1-23; Matthew v., 17-20; xii., 22-45; xvi., 1-4; xix., 3-12; xxi., 23-46; xxiii.

The whole scheme of things is redemptive : that is its basis, its meaning, its method and its issue.

"Not reckoning their trespasses unto men," is the graphic way in which Paul sums up the earthly ministry of our Lord. It is a deeply significant phrase, and fixes definitely the chief impression made on the mind of the apostle, by what he heard and knew of the historical Christ. Reasoning concerning the *nature* of Christ, he concluded that He was "God" incarnate. That explained all that Christ was and all that He did. Describing the *purpose* of that incarnation, he set it forth as a work of reconciling man to the will and character of God ; but when he signalizes the outstanding feature of the *ministry* of Christ in Palestine, he does not fix upon His "wise sayings" or His "mighty deeds," but on the entirely new way in which He treated sin and sinners. The trespasses of men did not block the way to frank, familiar, and fraternal intercourse with the most hated and most obnoxious classes of Jewish society. His critics said, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." It was a public scandal, but He faced it. "He has gone to be guest with a man who is a sinner," of the

same dye as the "assassins" and "robbers." Could anything be more reprehensible? Yet it does not hold Him back. Nay, more, He does not even shrink from elevating to the front rank of His apostolate, a member of the reprobate class of tax-gatherers, like Matthew, or of the anarchical class like Simon Zelotes, the desperate patriot, who was in revolt against Roman rule.

Jesus was pitiful towards the weakness and peril of man. He knew his enormous capacity for wrong-doing. "He Himself suffered being tempted." He was assailed again and again by the "prince of this world," the leader and inspirer of the evils of this world. His own fight was fierce and protracted.

> "The desert His temptations knew,
> His conflicts and His victories too."

But He so bravely wrought in the inner field of the soul, where all is lost or won, that He could say, "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me"; and, therefore, He never gave up hope of the victims of the most hideous vices, or of the most fiercely tempted; but met them with words that helped and healed, and

sent them forth assured of the divine mercy in their struggle with sin.

Therefore, Jesus is first and always the Saviour. He is called Jesus because He saves His people from their sins. He dies not for His own sins, but in obedience to righteousness, in love of men, and for the salvation of men. The burden of conscious guilt is lifted. Men are forgiven. The pilgrim sings, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death." The Religion of conscience is created. Christ has become a new conscience for the world, and a new passion for purity. He has broken the power of evil. The Prince of this world is judged. The Christ of God has been met by the mighty and mysterious forces of rebellion, and He has repelled successfully the assault, not merely curbed the massed evils of the world, but vanquished them, and in His victory made that of every man possible.

(3) He is the sinless one. He is Jesus Christ the Righteous. He knew no sin. He knew temptation, the fiercest and most malignant; and He fought it and won, so that He remained the Holiest amongst the holy, although He was tempted in all points like as we are. That is the

capital fact of Christianity. Its Founder is sinless. That is the exhaustless power of the Christian Religion. Its Author is sinless. That is the unsubduable argument for the Gospel. Its Creator is sinless. No impression went deeper into the minds of the contemporaries of Jesus, and certainly none was more formative of their life, their institutions and their literature, than that of the sinlessness of Jesus. The early Christians felt that Jesus possessed a sinless conscience. His moral consciousness was without a stain. He spoke about the forgiveness of sins, but never asked forgiveness for Himself. He is the pattern man everywhere but here, in everything except in this. He does not repent. He is not converted. He does not break with His past. He is the outstanding exception in this as He is the world's standard in everything else. The disciples rejoice in the forgiveness of sins. This is the spring of their exultation, and the source of their power ; but they never think of His joy as having any other source than that He gave Himself for their sins and was raised for their justification. Harnack says, "If we are not completely deceived, there lie behind the period of the life of Jesus which is

known to us no powerful crises and tumults, no break with His past. Nowhere in His maxims and speeches, whether He denounce and rebuke or tenderly attract and call, whether He speak of His relation to the Father or to this world, nowhere do we see any inner revolutions which He has endured or the scars of a frightful struggle. How self-evident is everything that comes from Him; just as if it could not be otherwise—so does the fountain break from the depths of the earth, clear and flowing free." [12]

This is one of the original factors in the Ideal Man, and it is the prophecy of what man is to become as he ascends to his true place and state.[13] For sin, as guilt on the conscience, and as a stumbling stone in the way of God, is removed by pardon; and sin, as habit and desire, is made an end of, by the creation of the holy will which urges the soul on, and for ever on, towards the goal of righteousness. With the forgiveness of sins there is the gift of the Spirit, that is, of the power to become what it is intended we should become, to realize the Christ life, to walk even as He walked, to live as He lived, to conquer as He

[12] "What is Christianity," pp. 32, 33. [13] See Note Page 305.

conquered, to purify ourselves even as He is pure, and to enter after Him upon the stainless and progressive life of the heavens.

This is man as seen in the Christian Religion.

NOTE 13. PAGE 304.

THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS.

Dr. Forrest writes: "Any man of ordinary intelligence and honest moral perceptions has, if he will, the power of recognizing that such a one as Jesus could not refrain from confessing sin, if He felt He had any to confess; that such confession, if it occurred at all, affecting as it must His whole tone and attitude towards God and man, must have been known to the disciples; that if they knew of it, it was morally impossible for them to speak of Him afterwards as the Sinless One and the Lord of Glory; and therefore that no rational account can be given of the Gospels as we have them unless on the hypothesis that the personality they depict was actually free from sin. He who ,having sinned, imagines himself stainless, is on a lower moral level, is less in touch with the ultimate reality, less near to the heart of God, than he who sins and repents. Will anyone say that St. Paul had truer self-knowledge than Jesus? People talk of *impossibilities;* but it has been demonstrated a hundred times over that the greatest of all impossibilities is to deny Christ's sinlessness, and yet form a self-consistent theory of His inward life." "The Authority of Christ," by D. W. Forrest, D.D. T. and T. Clark., p. 34.

LECTURE VIII.

The Ultimate Religion.

What is Religion as interpreted by Jesus Christ? Does the Religion, of which He is the Founder, contain the elements, the qualities and forces which constitute it the Ultimate Religion? Is He "the desire of all nations," "the one who should come, or are we to look for another?"

These are the questions we have now to discuss.

To attempt to describe the significance of Religion, and define its essence, would carry me to the ultimate problems of the philosophy of Religion;[1] and these problems, though closely related to the problems of Christianity, are outside the province of this course of lectures. But four observations must be made in order to prepare the way for the answers I have to give to the enquiries now before us.

[1] Cf. on this subject "The Pathway to Religion." The Gifford Lectures, 1902-3. By the Right Hon. R. B. Haldane. John Murray, 1903. "Philosophy and Theology." By J. H. Stirling, LL.D. T. and T. Clark, 1890.

(1) First, it would be surprising if a theme, so wide in its range, incalculable in its importance, and profound in its mysteriousness as Religion, were not subject to much confused thinking and misleading speech. That might be taken for granted ; but we may listen to Mr. A. C. Benson, when he says, Religion is "greatly misunderstood. How much it is misunderstood may be seen from the fact that, though the word itself, religion, stands for one of the most beautiful and simple things in the world, there yet hangs about it an aroma which is not wholly pleasing. What difficult service that great and humble name has seen ! With what strange and evil meanings it has been charged ! How dinted and battered it is with hard usage ! how dimmed its radiance, how stained its purity ! . . . " It has been "a weapon in the hands of dry, bigoted, offensive persons until its brightness is clouded, its keen edge hacked and broken."[2]

(2) A completely satisfactory definition of Religion has yet to be sought.[3] Philosophers and theologians are still enquiring into its signifi-

[2] "From a College Window," by A. C. Benson, p. 307.

[3] See Note Pages 345-347.

cance; but, however we may disagree as to what Religion means, it cannot be doubted that the Religious consciousness of man is a primary fact. Define it how we will, and differ as much as we may, as to the character and contents of that consciousness, it is agreed that it is there, as an indestructible part of our human nature. Man is built for religion. Every part of his structure is fitted for it, and he cannot escape it.[4] In some form or other it springs eternal in the human breast. Suppressed for an hour and a day it emerges in some fresh manifestation, with increased energy, like waters set free after being held back. All that man is, his thought and imagination, his conscience, his feeling of fear and admiration, his sense of dependence and capacity for hope, his struggle with evil, his self-censure, his will, the whole structure of the man urges him towards religion. Religion is the end of man. In realizing it he finds the interpretation of his own life, the solace for his sorrows, the

[4] "Religion is a basal phenomenon of human experience, primary, not to be analysed further. At least, all attempts to reduce Religion to simple, primary functions of the human mind, have so far failed."—Bousset, "Das Wesen der Religion," 1903. p. 10.

victory over the world, the fulfilment of the purpose of his creation, and the solution of the problems of his experience. It is the most precious possession, and the most glorious distinction of humanity. To the individual it is at once the way and the goal of existence. It guides and enriches his thought, thrills, warms and uplifts his emotions, illumines and quickens his conscience, and adds power to his will. It supplies the ideas and ideals by, and for, which men live. It gives life its true imperative for conduct, and sustains the anticipation of realizing, after much conflict, its true aims. It is the defence and sunshine, the beauty and glory of the home. It is the basis of the social order, and the chief contributor to social progress. It is a state-building force. Nations go up or down in the scale of worth according to the reality, truth and fulness of their religion. It is the factor of greatest magnitude in the whole life of man.

(3) Moreover man, perforce, is always seeking the best religion. Unconsciously he shares in the evolution of Religion, because he cannot rest till he finds the secret of the Eternal Religion. Slowly but surely he goes forward to the ultimate

faith. He is made for truth and cannot dwell always with falsehood. He is made for reality, and must separate himself from vain show and infinite pretence. He will cling to the old with a tenacity that makes the men who interpret the eternal years by the fleeting days despair; for he is not only the child, but largely the slave of the past; nevertheless, he is a man, and has in him that which lifts him out of the local to the universal, and constrains him to advance. He is not only made for religion; but for the best Religion, for the best thought of God; for the most fitting attitude towards the supreme and the supernatural; and for those relations towards humanity and the world in which all men achieve their best.

(4) Therefore men will be heard in all lands saying: "Sirs, we would see Jesus." They will wish to know what the Supreme Religious Person of all the ages has to say as to Religion! They may not rise up at once and follow Him; but they will listen, as they are doing now in China, and Japan, in India and the isles of the sea, to what He has to reveal, and they will inquire as to what He has to give. For dimly they see

that the object of life is character, and the meaning of life is spiritual, and the idea of life the rule of a loving, holy Father : and, therefore, they are bound to heed in the end of the day the great invitation,

"Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

II.

To understand any religion two lines of investigation must be pursued.

First we must seek its vital principle, its formative idea or ideas, its characteristic spirit and tone, its real soul.

Secondly, we must observe its various modes of manifestation ; the institutions it creates, the ritual it enjoins, the creeds it shapes, and the social services it renders.

The first line of study deals with the rise and progress of religion in the soul, and is concerned with the man as Mahometan or Jew, Buddhist or Christian, traces the ways in which his religion affects him as man thinking and construing, in the terms of his religion, the facts of the universe, harmonizing its conflicting elements, and explaining its ideas.

Then, it follows the religion into the realm of feeling; and examines the emotions it stirs of awe and admiration, of fear and love, of dependence and regret, of self-censure or pride; how his religion affects him towards the powers above and around him, his attitude to the supreme and supernatural.

Next, it enquires into the part played by his religion upon his moral consciousness; his standards of behaviour, his laws of self-judgment, his conscience and his ideals of character.

And fourthly, the religion must be watched in its effect on the will; how it feeds his executive energy, gives moral initiative and impact, inflames zeal, fires enthusiasm, sustains patience and courage, sweetness and strength, and forms and binds into unity habits of social beneficence.

The soul of the Hebrew Religion is that God is one, the sovereign One. He is God alone, and besides Him there is none else. The Deuteronomic declaration, "Hear, O Israel our Lord is one Lord," lies at the basis, and shapes the entire structure, of that faith. He is the one God, and the people of Israel are the one people, the elect of God, set apart from the rest of the nations by

the distinguishing favour of a special covenant. He is their God, and they are His people. Theoretically Jehovah is the God of the whole earth ; practically He is the exclusive possession of the professors of the Mosaic faith. Him they serve with a fear that is the beginning of wisdom, and an awe that is the beginning of humility and reverence. To His sovereignty they bow, and on His enduring mercy they depend. His holiness quickens their dread, and His righteousness is their confidence and inspiration.

Mahomet fashions the faith of Islam largely on the Hebrew pattern ; proclaims the same divine unity, but translates it, first, into the terms of his own strange and tumultuous experience as one possessed and inspired, forced, like Jeremiah, into speech by a fire in his bones, so that he is weary with forbearing and cannot stay ; and, next, into the language of an irresistible will, which becomes, in the minds of his followers, a blind and inexorable necessity, an all-mastering fatalism, impelling them to the acceptance of the apostolate of Mahomet, and a heedless obedience to his commands.

The soul of the Greek Religion, to take one

other example, is the idea of beauty, and its movement in the soul of the Greek is towards the development of the finest æsthetic taste, the love of truth, the search for knowledge, the admiration of all that is perfect in form, pleasing in colour, and true in statement.

But the inward and spiritual grace of a religion is one thing ; the outward and visible forms of its manifestation are many, and they must be studied and discriminated in order to know what a religion really is.

Hebraism, for example, is seen in its Scriptures, in the word spoken in divers ways unto the fathers by the prophets ; the songs chanted by the poets ; the laws promulgated by the legislators from Moses onwards ; in the ceremonial rites, the sacrifices and the worship practised by the priesthood ; in the struggles of the Commonwealth for centuries against the tyranny of Egypt, the soldiers of Assyria and Persia, Greece and Rome ; in wanderings of the Hebrew race over the wide earth, "as a strange example of a destroyed nation, but an indestructible people. Without the commercial or colonising energy of their Phœnician kinsmen ; without the archi-

tectural genius and patient industry which built the monuments and cities of Egypt ; without the ambition and courage which raised their Assyrian brethren to empire and a sovereign civilisation ; without the poetic and speculative genius of the Greeks ; without the martial and political capacity of the Romans, the politically unimportant and despised Hebrews have excelled these gifted nations, singly and combined, in religious faculty and in the power exercised through religion on mankind." [5]

Nor is the incarnation of a religion fashioned upon the lines of Hebraism very dissimilar. In the Koran you have its creed ; in Mahomet its chief prophet and teacher ; and in fasting and prayer and almsgiving its principal rites. Mecca is its Zion, its holy city, the goal of every true Islamite, and its black stone and holy well are its symbols, sacred for evermore. The institution it creates is a Commonwealth, a Church which is a State, a State which is a Church ; a State of warriors for religion, and a Church of apostles for religion ; God Himself, the Almighty, the

[5] A. M. Fairbairn, "Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History" (1876) p. 200.

Invincible Fighter for a people, who, though split and fissured by immemorial hatreds, are fused into one massed and irresistible force against all unbelievers.

For the manifestations of the Hellenic love of beauty you turn to its eternally reproductive literature, its imperishable statues, its splendid architecture, its illustrious philosophers and teachers, its conquest of Rome, and its unrivalled mastery of the thought and culture of the civilized world.

III.

We make, then, our appeal to Jesus concerning the Christian Religion. What is its place in His Life and Teaching? What is its soul?

How is that soul expressed in Him?

How ought His Religion to manifest itself in the life of man?

(1) It was with religion Jesus dealt in His conversations with His disciples, His addresses to the people, and His debates with the masters of the Jewish faith. He saw all things in their religious aspects. All His ideas were religious. The real meaning of the world to Him was spiritual; there was no sacred *and* secular for

Him, only the sacred. All was holy and just and good. Though He never used the word religion, or any word that means religion, in its theological, ecclesiastical, or ceremonial sense, yet He spoke on no other theme, and dealt with all the facts of life and experience, from no other point of view.

The conflicts in which He engaged were roused by His antagonism to the current notions of religion. The men of His day, the best men, sincere, pious, devout and earnest, had lost the secret of religion. He came to reveal it. They wholly misunderstood it. He knew its inmost nature. They dwelt in its forms, and mistook the clothes for the soul. He stripped away the accumulated wrappages so that men might see and possess the eternal substance. They made it a treasure for the cultured, a prize for the elect. He brought it to the door of the humblest seeker after God. They set it out in a florid ritual, a rigid creed, a mechanical exercise, and in a hard, cold and intolerant Church, He made it "a message to individual hearts bewildered by the complexity of the world and the intricacy of religious

observances";[6] a sanctuary for the soul hunted by the furies of remorse, a home for the spirit wandering in search of rest; a heaven for the weary and tired heart.

(2) Religion was central to His life. He was, and is, Religion; its vital principle; its final type; its perfect incarnation; and His teaching is only the verbal expression of Himself; Himself articulate; so that he that hath seen Him hath seen Religion in its true nature and essence, its spirit and atmosphere, its inward freedom and power. Its ideas are in Him; its feeling He breathes, its radiant purity He reveals, its work He does. Religion is realised in Him, reproduced by Him; and made supreme in the life of man through Him. Take Religion away from Jesus and there is nothing left. Find Religion in its full beauty and strength, and you find Him.

(3) It is clear from our sources that Religion as interpreted by Jesus begins in:

(*a*) A knowledge of God, of God revealed as the real Father of men; holy and loving, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, freely and gladly, on the initiative of His own infinite

[6] A. C. Benson's "From a College Window," p. 310.

mercy, and from the impulse of His unsolicited love. It is God, seen and known, as love and lovable; seeking lost men, calling them to Himself, making them at one with Himself, at great cost, and offering them the privilege of sons of God and brothers with Jesus. Man's relation to the supra-sensible world is expressed by Christ in the terms of a son to a Father, son and Father knowing each other with a knowledge that is intimate and love-creating; the son made gloriously free by his subjection to the Father, and obedient and joyous in his freedom.

The formative idea in the rise and growth of the Christian Religion in the soul is this lovableness of the holy Father. God is seen in Jesus as a being who inspires love, not a cringing fear; creates trust and hope, not dread and despair; as working with man against the evil that is in him and in the world, and enabling him to use that same world, so as to draw out from himself all the best that is in him, or that can be put into him.

Religion is life; and life is a question of right relations; of man getting into his true relationship to the Father, that is to the source of all right

and progress. Watch the daisy. It opens its petals when the light dawns, and closes them at sunset. It is in the right place to absorb out of the earth and atmosphere the nutritive forces it needs; therefore it grows. Go into a garden and ask what all the various plants are doing. They toil not, neither do they spin. They have no visible machinery, and yet they are all capturing sunbeams and converting them into fragrance, essences, flowers and fruits for the pleasure and welfare of the world. Put your water-wheel in the stream, and it turns. Man, by putting himself into right relation with the energies close to hand, multiplies his forces a million-fold. So long as we are in the wrong place, that is, so long as our minds are outside the truth, we cannot grow in Religion. The secret of the growth of Jesus is that He starts from the right point, and keeps in the right path to the end. He lives in and for God, is bathed with the warm light of His presence and nourished by habitual fellowship with, and work for, the Father. So man enters into Religion by communion with the great ideas of the Christian Revelation and with the God those ideas disclose.

(*b*) Furthermore, out of those ideas of God

there springs the feeling for God, and for His kingdom, which is the chief characteristic of the soul of the Religion of Jesus. "Never was God felt as such a living presence in the life of any man. Jesus breathed in an atmosphere of God; everything in His life, so far as we know it, was religion. With every word He directed His own and His hearers' souls towards God; in every situation of His life, even the most difficult, He took refuge with God and listened to His voice; all joy became a thanksgiving, and all pain a submission to God's will. Everything in Him is aimed at the highest and ultimate goal; nowhere is there any slackening or trifling or pursuit of side-issues. Piety informs His life like a never-failing electric current, flowing with quiet and even force through His soul, free from all hindrance and distraction."[7] Jesus says, "The things which I speak unto you I speak by the Father." Again, "The living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father." And once more, "As the Father loveth Me so have I loved you." It is Jesus listening for the Father's voice, depending on the Father's life, united and gladdened by the Father's

[7] Bousset's "Jesus," pp. 103, 104.

love. Now those are the notes of the Christian. He dwells in love, because He dwells in God. His characteristic mood is that of love, for the love of God is spread abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given in Christ. "We love because He first loved us." That love sees and feels God everywhere. The world is His dwelling-place. Life is the sphere of His graciously redemptive action. Experience is a succession of fresh revealings of the ways of love in pardoning and renewing, in quickening and uplifting man. And that love constrains us not to live to ourselves; it breaks the bonds of selfishness, overthrows the barriers of race and rank, of colour and creed; inspires with reverence for man as man; frees and expands the soul to the uttermost of passionate devotion to the service of God in the salvation of mankind.

(*c*) But it is of the essence of the Religion of Jesus to put first the righteous rule of the righteous God. Jesus never separates morality and Religion. With Him they are one. God has joined them together in a perpetual union. They are two phases of the same experience, as vine and branches of the same tree, as root and foliage,

bole and fruit. Jesus is duty incarnate. Conviction rings in all His speech. "I must be about my Father's business," says the boy. "I must work the works of Him that sent me," declares the man; and in both you catch the clear accents of high purpose and firm resolve; a resolve that exalts duty above all human ties and discharges it in spite of all risks. The Religion of Jesus makes Him obedient to righteousness unto death, even the death of the Cross.

The religious life in Christ Jesus is the obligation to obey recognized as delight; it is stewardship discharged with exultation. Necessity holds us in its unrelenting grip; but we are glad to be held. We cannot escape; we would not if we could. Paul is proud to be the slave of Jesus. A Christ-taught conscience is a stronghold of character, a spring of heroic and death-daring service, an ever-flowing fountain of the enthusiasm of humanity. "Fidelity to conviction is the mainstay of human advancement," says John Morley. And I add, the Religion of Jesus creates and sustains that fidelity.

(*d*) Lastly: Every religion reaches its highest ranges in the production of personal character.

The Hebrew Religion gives us Moses and Isaiah, Elijah and Jeremiah. The Greek, Socrates and Plato, Sophocles and Pericles, Aristides and Phidias: Buddhism, Buddha; and Islam, Mahomet. It is the unique glory of the Religion of Jesus that it supplies to the world the most finished and perfect character it has ever known.

But Jesus is what He is by the Religion He created. The Gospels show Him to us "in the making." "He grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke speaks of Him as he might have done of Samuel, the son of Hannah; or as Froude might have written of Martin Luther, the son of Margaret. He shows Jesus in every-day conditions of life, but winning where we fail, advancing where we recede, receding where we advance, obedient where we rebel, serenely calm and strong where we are fretted and care-worn; attaining to the fulness of the stature of a perfect manhood; and filled with all the fulness of God. Tracing His character to its sources of nutriment, Jesus says, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work." Trust in, and communion with, the Father made Him. The perfect correspondence between Jesus the

Son and God the Father is the spring of His true and enduring growth, of the spontaneity and completeness of His self-sacrifice, of His patience and endurance; of His non-resisting and gentle passivities, and of His severe grandeur and majesty.

Emerson says, "As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so it is ever to so much of His attributes as we bring to it." The Christian Religion makes men partakers of the Divine nature. They have "the mind of Christ." They receive of His fulness, and grace for grace. They become like Him; repeat His trust and love, humility and patience. The distinction of the Religion of Jesus is in the beauty and strength and grace of the men and women it makes. Never was any religion more fully interpreted than Christianity in the words and work and person of its Founder Christ Jesus our Lord.

(4) This, however, as we have said, does not exhaust the sources of our knowledge of the Religion of Jesus. We must follow it into its manifestations, its modes of expression, its attitude towards the formal elements of religion, creeds and ritual, worship and organization. It is not

enough to know what the Religion of Jesus was in and to Himself, as a personal force, we must ask in what ways did it express itself to His disciples and to the men of His day.

Four facts may be specified.

(*a*) First, Jesus entirely subordinates the formal to the spiritual in Religion. He makes the soul supreme, never secondary, in all the manifestation of the religious life. It is sincerity and whole-hearted devotion that is the one thing needful; not place, or time, or anything external.

The religions of the world have always had their sacred places and sacred hours, and have often lost the reality of religion in care for them. Hebraism had its Mount Zion, Islam its Mecca, and Hinduism its Pooree. It was held that they were the vehicles of a special grace, the mediators of religious power.

Jesus sowed the seed of an eternal revolt against such a notion of worship when He said to the tired and thirsty wayfarer at Jacob's well, who thought that if she knew anything it was religion, and if she could debate anything it was the familiar controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, "do not think there is any special sanctity

in places. It is sincerity of soul that is demanded. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must do so spiritually and sincerely, for such the Father seeks to worship Him." "These words alone," says Mazzini, "would suffice to establish the superiority of Christianity over all creeds; the great thinkers, from Socrates and Plato to those of our own time, predicted the fall of one faith and the rise of another; but not one foretold, like Jesus, the true nature of a future faith." Christianity has no holy place. The universe is the Temple of God.

(*b*) Not only does Jesus set in this lower place the formal elements of time and place; but acts of worship themselves are treated by Him as entirely subordinate to deep reverence for man as man, and the promotion of brotherly unity and concord. The service of man is the highest worship of God; and worship of God is intended to issue in such service. Jesus speaking of the sacrifices of religion, says, "If, therefore, when you are offering your gift upon the altar, you remember that your brother has a grievance against you, leave your gift there upon the altar, and go and make friends with your brother, and then return and complete your sacrifice." You

may not have wronged your brother, or if you have, you may not have intended it ; but he thinks you have. He is losing happiness and regards you as the cause of the loss. There is a shadow on his life, and it is thrown by you. You are innocent, perchance, and you are proceeding to an act of worship. Jesus says, "Stay, do not go forward with it ; hasten to the wounded soul and pour into it the balm of your consolation ; go at once ! There must be no delay ! Suspend the service of worship ! Be reconciled to your brother, and then return and offer your gift." Worship is robbed of all its acceptableness to God if we are not at one with our brother. Could the priority of the claims of brotherhood over those of public worship be urged in a more impressive or more authoritative way ?

(*c*) It is not too much to say that Christianity is neither an institution, nor an organization. It is a spirit which embodies itself in various organic forms ; but it is always more and greater than any of the forms it creates. Jesus does not formally command Christians to come together into an ecclesiastical federation. He creates the Christian life

and the possessors of it come together and cohere.[8] Hints of a new "Church" or Society are so rare in the Gospels, that it is doubtful whether they really exist as part of the verifiable record; and the censures of Jesus on the irreligious and tyrannical machinery of Judaism, its priests, scribes and lawyers, were so abundant and so severe as to constitute a perpetual warning against the enormous perils to real religion which beset all, except the freest, combinations of Christian men.

(*d*) Nor was it likely that Jesus would set out His ideas in creedal form, and stereotype His thought in the language of the theologians. The letter kills. It is the spirit that gives life. Jesus leaves nothing in writing; and is not solicitous that the forms of His health-giving word shall be handed on from generation to generation. He knows that His words will not pass away, because they have in them an eternal vitality and reproductiveness.

It is indisputable then that the formal elements in the Religion of Jesus are of an entirely secondary character. Creeds and ceremonies, liturgies and rituals, institutions and organizations,

[8] Lotze's "Philosophy of Religion," p. 144.

are as dust in the balance compared with life, courage, the choice of what is noble, the acceptance of burdens, the ascent of the soul to a higher spiritual order, the enthusiasm of humanity, the triumph of the kingdom of God. His Religion is the religion of the spirit, and freedom and spontaneity of action are absolutely indispensable to its strength and perfection. Jesus is in the van of progress. He leads, and He is far more careful about liberty, for the sake of virtue, progress, and humanity, than He is about order and organization, for the sake of dignity and peace. His Religion can only live in the bracing air of freedom. He claimed it. He fought for it. He died on the Cross to win it, and His Religion dies if it cannot have it.

IV.

That, then, is original Christianity, but is it the ultimate Religion? Does it, as we find it in Jesus, contain the qualities and forces of a universal and eternal Religion?

(1) Now these questions, we must remember, can only be accurately answered by an appeal to Jesus Himself. The Religion must be judged by Him; not by the best or the poorest men who

now embody it, or who have attempted to express it; by Jesus, not by Judas; by Jesus, not by disciples who have betrayed Him; whose meanness and selfishness and baseness have misrepresented Him. Still less is the test of the finality of Christianity to be found in any or all the "Churches" which are called by His name, and profess allegiance to His authority. Mr. Benson, an unbiassed witness, asks, "Could there, to any partial observer, be anything in the world more incredible than that the Pope, surrounded by ritual and pomp, and hierarchies, and policies, should be held to be the representative on earth of the peasant-teacher of Galilee?[9]

Nor, do we obtain a satisfactory test by leaving Rome and going to the stereotyped immobility of the Greek Church in Moscow, or to the confusion and disorder, the heated strife, and restless jealousies of the churches throughout all the world. Worse still, is it to identify the Religion of Jesus with a particular race, European or Asiatic, white or otherwise, but worst of all to confuse it with any political or military State, like England or Germany, as some countries do. Men have

[9] A. C. Benson's "From a College Window," p. 313.

suffered indescribably by trusting to these inapplicable tests, and as a result the progress of goodness and virtue has been seriously hindered.

The indisputable proofs that the Religion of Jesus is final are in—

(1) Its unequalled ethical elevation,

(2) Its sound bases for the highest social order,

(3) Its illimitable range over all the fields of human life, and

(4) The completeness of the content it gives to the intellect, the heart, and the conscience of man.

(1) The ethical test of Religion is at once the most obvious and the most frequently employed. "The man in the street" and the factory knows little of any other; the student of religions finds it one of the most reliable that he can use; and the practical man obtains an assured peace from it, even when he is unable to employ others which he may regard as of superior efficiency.

(*a*) Antiquity has completely lost its authority in the realm of Religion. Few care, except as a matter of passing curiosity, to know how old the vine is; all ask what is the quality of the

grape. Indeed, the older a church, the more deeply rooted in the past, the less likely it is to be vital and virile, free and robust, throbbing with human sympathies, aggressive towards the evils of the world, and serviceable to man. We do not inquire of a religion where and when did it originate and at what date, except as we are interested in its historical development; we want to know how it affects the conduct, the type of man it produces, the atmosphere it creates in the home, and the impact it gives to social progress. In "the Sermon on the Mount," Jesus directly challenged the long-established and hoary religion of His day, boldly charged it with narrowness and superficiality, and set over against its obsolete verdicts His own more illuminating and quickening revelations.

(*b*) Some religions are non-ethical. They do not touch the conscience. They are mainly æsthetic and intellectual, or ceremonial and spectacular. Others tend to cruelty, encourage practices that debase and degrade the individual, and disintegrate society. The Religion of Jesus is ethical from first to last, intensely and entirely ethical. It is the Religion of conscience. It cares

nothing for the emotion that ends in itself, or that breaks out in vacuous speech of adoration, "Lord, Lord," and refuses the prompt surrender of the will and the hearty consecration of the life. Still less is it content with a barren intellectualism that spends itself in interminable theological debates, and never translates ideas into deeds. Least of all is it satisfied with an unreal ceremonialism. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." He concentrated attention upon the genuinely moral elements of the law and of the prophets, and stripped off the juristic and ritualistic accretions in which they had hidden those elements out of sight. He insisted on reality. He was the foe of pretence in religion. He would not suffer any juggling with words. He forced men to face the supreme moral demands, the ultimate moral realities. His passion for sincerity, for truth in the inward parts, for absolute fidelity to the fact as it is, was indescribably intense and overwhelming; therefore, so long as man cares to be man, His religion will always be at the heart of things, at the very centre, and on the throne of the advancing life of man.

Jesus went further. He preached and exemplified the heroism of ethics, of fiery zeal and flaming enthusiasm for righteousness. With a bold orientalism He said the offending eye must come out, and out at once; the hand that would lay hold of evil must be removed, and at a stroke; the foot that is swift to shed blood must be cut off, and on the spot. Goodness must be enthroned within, and freed from hindrance to its sway. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. He may commit murder without a sword, and with his lips. It is not enough to say, "Thou shalt not." Life is not a series of negatives. It is a body of insistent affirmations. It must be intense and full. "Christ," says R. L. Stevenson, "would never hear of negative morality; 'thou shalt' was ever His word." "Thou shalt love the Lord with *all* thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." Forgive your brother seven times? Seven times, forsooth! Forgiveness is not a matter of arithmetic, but of the soul; seventy times seven must the forgiveness be bestowed—that is, it must be without any limit at all.

Jesus does not make the "average" man. He

leaves him behind. He can do little with him who is neither hot nor cold. He creates what the world calls "the extreme men," the "immoderate men," the "visionaries," "the enthusiasts," the fanatics," the "anarchists"—the men of movement and energy, of impulse and daring; resistless apostles, not careful diplomats; men of fire, passion, and heroic dash, not of pinched decorum and smiling correctitude; men of deathless optimism, saved by hope, not of gloomy pessimism, imprisoned in despair; men who fiercely eject evil from themselves, and fight it in the world; who hold fast the good, and distribute it far and near; men of self-sacrificing zeal, and of the highest ethical elevation. The Religion of Jesus supplies an exhaustless moral dynamic.

It is the religion that leads the world ethically. Baron Maejima, a Japanese ex-cabinet Minister, speaking in Tokio, said: "I firmly believe we must have religion as the basis of our national and personal welfare. No matter how large an army or navy we may have, unless we have righteousness at the foundation of our national existence, we shall fall short of highest success. I do not hesitate to say that we must rely upon religion

for our highest welfare. And when I look about me to see what religion we may best rely upon, I am convinced that the Religion of Christ is the one most full of strength and promise for the nation."

And if for Japan, with its splendid ethical development, then surely for the world.

(2) If the power of moral initiative is the test of tests for a religion, that which surely comes next in availableness and authority is the capacity of a religion to create the most just and perfect social order.

Mahometanism cannot possibly be the ultimate religion, for it authorizes slavery, whereas Christianity slowly but surely destroys it. It promulgates polygamy, stamps woman with inferiority, places the child in a deleterious atmosphere; whilst Christianity exalts woman, and makes her equal with man in the higher regions of the spirit, and in the end that rules all other realms. Mahometanism discourages trade; Christianity promotes it. Mahometanism is the foe of social progress; Christianity is its inspiration. Mahometanism is incompatible with modern philanthropic and commercial ideas; Christianity

purifies and advances them. Mahometanism violates the established fundamental principles of the perfect social order, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Jesus is their source ; His Religion is their nourishment and strength.

His doctrine of man contains within its arms His doctrine of liberty and brotherhood. His inculcation of the deepest reverence for man involves the gift of full freedom to each man for realizing his life. When he says, "One is your master, and all ye are brothers," He reveals the family spirit that must rule in society, and rejects the idea that the unit must live in and for the whole, and be its slave ; and says that the whole lives in and through and for the unit ; the commonwealth through and for the individual.

So His doctrine of God, as the Father of all, strikes a fatal blow at the socially destructive idea of wealth as an egoistic treasure to be consumed in selfish pleasure, held in independence and not in trusteeship, for the separation of man from man, and not for unity and brotherhood, for strife and misery, and not for peace and happiness. As Christ interprets God, that mammon notion of wealth is atheistic, a direct denial of

God as Father ; and for men to use their wealth on themselves, for their own benefit, and not for the advantage of society, is flat insubordination to the will of God revealed in Christ.[10] The parables of Jesus show that all wealth really is the indivisible patrimony of the Father. As Rosadi says, speaking of the teaching of Christ, "The first blow of the axe was bound to be directed against *wealth*, the principal cause of the differences and rancour characterising social struggles ; wealth, which is the first obstacle to the reign of the paternity of God, as it is also its most irreconcilable negation, since it breaks the filial relation of man to the Father, and the fraternal bond between men." [11]

But the bottom rock of the social edifice is liberty, and by liberty it is built up as the true and happy home of man. The story of the world is one long fight for freedom. "The Wars of Religion" is the revealing title of one of the most interesting volumes of the Cambridge Modern

[10] Signor Rosadi's "Trial of Jesus," p. 24.

[11] "Property does not belong less to others than to themselves, and that they should only possess it for the sole and unalterable object of administering it no longer for their own advantage, but for the benefit of their neighbours." Ibid. p. 30.

History. All religions have their books of martyrs. It is a pathetic fact that the history of religion is written in blood, and illuminated by Smithfield fires. The sword has preached the evangel. Coercion has been the means of conversion. Men of different faiths have regarded one another as natural foes to be checked, subdued, or exterminated. Jews have no dealing with Samaritans, or Anglicans with Dissenters. Men still speak of "toleration," not of equality, and say "liberty is a good thing in its way, only it needs to be limited and guarded by the 'Church'"—that is, by a dominant and intolerant section of society.

Now, the Religion of Jesus is distinctly and overwhelmingly against all persecution. It bids us suffer, not inflict suffering. Its one great symbol is the cross on which we must allow ourselves to be crucified, but on which we must never crucify others. Persecution for the sake of religion is blaspheming the spirit of Him who endured the Cross and despised the shame. Tolstoi is right. We must resist evil, but only passively, not by resentment and retaliation; and we must preach, in season and out, the central

doctrine of the Gospel of Christ, and of the Baptist faith, the divine doctrine of "soul liberty."

If better guarantees for the ultimate religion can be found than those which appear in the social principles of the Religion of Jesus, I do not know them.

(3) Again, the Religion which is to be the climax and crown of other religions must be essentially universal. It must embrace the whole world-process, in its beginnings and ends, origins and issues. It must not be the property of any specific age, but the joy and strength of all ages. Its functions must not be limited to one era ; but be suitable for all. It must appeal to the whole man, and to all men; to human life in all lands, in all stages of culture; and it must be independent of all social and political conditions.

Have I not, in stating these demands, described the Religion of the Son of Man ? Is the race indubitably one ? Christianity abolishes all colour prejudices, and declares that in the "new nature" there is "neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither barbarian nor Scythian, but Christ is all and in all, and in Him all are made one." Is knowledge a unity, and wide-ranging as

man ? So the "mental seclusion," due to the schooling of men in different nations, gradually disappears in the presence of the fact of brotherhood ; the windows of the mind are opened on all sides and light streams in from all quarters of the compass. Is evolution an undeniable fact ? So the seeds of the "divine words," as Justin and Clement, of Alexandria, held, are diffused amongst the pagan religions, and under the genial influences of the Gospel they have developed into nourishing harvests which all enjoy. Must the ultimate Religion present the ultimate realities in such a form that they shall be apprehensible by all men ? Then surely we have them in these three ideas ; God as Holy Father ; man as of infinite and ever increasing worth and preciousness, and the whole scheme of things as convergent upon his spiritual development in obedience to the ideal revealed in Christ Jesus.

(4) But it will be found that the Religion that is most sure of permanence is that which is completely congruent with the reason and heart of man, and marks out the surest pathway to reality. Men cannot be content with a religion that is not based on truth and fact. It must not only

approximate to the truth, it must be entirely true; true in Him who is the Truth.

It must also be roomy, capacious enough to house and appropriate the entire issues of the world-evolution. Nothing that is human must be alien to it. It must meet all the needs of man, the needs of to-day and of to-morrow, of life and of ceasing from life, of the individual and of society, of the intellect and of the heart, of the conscience, and of the will; and therefore, in its conception of God and man, it must be independent of time and place.

"Jesus founds His Religion with the claim to reveal God fully; so that beyond it there is no further revelation thinkable and to be expected." [12]

This then is where the authority of the Religion of Christ resides; it is in these four facts and in Him who creates them. His Religion is the ultimate, the absolute, the eternal revelation. It is not merely more gracious than Judaism, more hopeful than Buddhism, more spiritual than Mahometanism, and more inspiring and ethical than Confucianism. It is the Religion which contains all the good that is in every other

[12] "The Ritschlian Theology," by Dr. Garvie, p. 266.

religion. It is divine, magnificent, transcendental, surpassing the highest thoughts of men. It is the Religion of God.

V.

In His Religion Jesus is supreme. He is its authority, the very fulness of its power. He rules in it. He is the supreme Religious Person, and His Religion is the best we know; gives us the best view of God and of man; explicates the mystery of life, drills us in the mastery of the things of life, transfigures death and prepares for eternity. To know Him is light and life. To win Him, so as to possess Him and to be possessed by Him, is power, peace and victory. To submit to His authority is perfect freedom.

He is supreme; not any church; not all the churches. Ecclesiastical authority is extinguished. There is one Master in Religion and only one. Churches may preach His gospel, teach His truth, and carry out His missionary mandate; but not one or all of them may usurp His place over a single soul or a single society of men.

Sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism are superseded. They belong to the infancy of religions; they never had any place in the religion of Christ.

Whenever they have obtruded on men in His name it has been a usurpation. They have no right.

Jesus is all and Jesus is enough. O that Christian men could be content with Jesus! That is life for you and me and all men!

NOTE 3. PAGE 307.

DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION.

[3] "By religion I mean the power, whatever it be, which makes a man choose what is hard rather than what is easy, what is lofty and noble rather than what is mean and selfish; that puts courage into timorous hearts, and gladness into clouded spirits; that consoles men in grief, misfortune, and disappointment; that makes them joyfully accept a heavy burden; that, in a word, uplifts men out of the dominion of material things, and sets their feet in a purer and simpler region."—"From a College Window," by A. C. Benson, p. 308.

"Religion, so far as it is a matter of philosophical investigation, has a two-fold sense—a subjective and an objective, or a personal and a collective, or an ideal and an historical. As subjective it denotes certain thoughts, ideas, feelings, and tendencies which belong to man as man. As objective it denotes the beliefs, the legends, the mythologies, the sacred books and creeds in which the thought is articulated; the ritual, ceremonial, acts or institutions of worship in which the feeling is embodied; the customs or laws by which the acts are regulated and sanctioned; and the practices, conventions, and social judgments by which the tendencies are developed and enforced. A provisional definition might therefore run

somewhat thus :—Religion is, subjectively, man's consciousness of relation to supra-sensible Being; and, objectively, the beliefs, the customs, the rites, and the institutions which express and incorporate this consciousness."--"The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, p. 200.

Dr. Newton H. Marshall says in "Theology and Truth," p. 121, "Most definitions of Religion agree in one particular, however much they may be at variance in other matters. They agree in asserting that religion is a relation of man *to a certain relatively noble object*, to another world, to a supreme Being, to many high beings, to the supernatural in general." Dr. Marshall gives as examples, Robertson Smith ("The Religion of the Semites"), Religion is "that part of conduct determined by relation to God"; Max Müller ("Physical Religion," p. 296), "a perception of the infinite"; also Martineau ("A Study of Religion," p. 1), and Professor Upton ("Hibbert Lectures," p. 18).

"I am of opinion that Religion is not a turning away from what is real, but the focussing of our thoughts to which we are led, by meeting with One who is real, and in whose presence there is nothing possible for us but to submit ourselves in reverence and in trust."—"Faith and Morals," by Wilhelm Hermann, D.D., p. 76.

"Religion in accordance with the fact that it seeks to meet the need for the maintenance and development of human life, either in all directions, or in some particular aspect, is always a definite inward attitude on the part of men toward the power or powers upon which human life—its existence, growth, and upbuilding, its perfection and completion—depends."—Prof. E. W. Mayer, D.D., Ph.D.: "Das psychologische Wesen der Religion und die Religionen," 1906. p. 9.

As a contrast to this, see Prof. E. Caird's definition: "Religion is simply a higher form of the tendency which in Science leads us to seek the universal beyond the particular."—"Evolution of Religion," vol. i., p. 3.

Canon Scott Holland says: "The word 'Religion,' after all, has a meaning; and we do not get forward by labouring to disguise from ourselves this awkward fact. This positive meaning allows everything that can be asked in the way of sanctity and worth, for nature and the natural life. All of it is God-given, God-inspired, God-directed; all of it is holy. But the *fact* of this being so is one thing; the *recognition* of it is another; and it is this recognition of God in things which is the core and essence of Religion."—"Lux Mundi." Twelfth edition, p. 19.

"Religion is not a method, it is a life, a higher and supernatural life, mystical in its root, and practical in its fruits; a communion with God, a calm and deep enthusiasm, a love which radiates, a force which acts, a happiness which overflows."—Henri F. Amiel.

"It is evident that religion consists so much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion. And no light in the understanding is good which does not produce holy affection in the heart."—Jonathan Edwards.

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